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UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION

Initial reports of States parties due in 1996

Addendum

UZBEKISTAN

[27 December 1999]

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NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

Tashkent 1999

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Ministry of Education
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Internal Affairs
International non-governmental organization "Soglom Avlod Uchun"
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Introduction

1. Young people under 30 make up more than half the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan and 11 million of these - or 48.2 per cent of the population - are under 18. Given that the country's normal democratic development is impossible without addressing, as a matter of priority, the task of upholding the rights and freedoms and of children, the Uzbek Government has conducted extensive work in this area of public relations.

2. The Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989 was one of the first international instruments to which the Republic of Uzbekistan acceded, with parliamentary ratification on 9 December 1992.

3. The present document has been prepared by the National Human Rights Centre, following the general guidelines regarding the form and contents of periodic reports to be submitted by States parties under article 44, paragraph 1 (b) of the Convention. Part I of the report provides general information on the Republic of Uzbekistan. Part II describes the situation of children in the Republic of Uzbekistan, exploring the interrelationship between children and the processes of national reform and building a constitutional democratic State. Part III provides information on measures to comply with commitments under the Convention in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

4. The report uses information obtained from the responsible ministries and departments and also from a number of non-governmental organizations dealing with children's rights issues, including the Mahallya, Kamolot and Soglom Avlod Uchun foundations, the Central Committee of the Red Crescent Society of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Women's Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

PART I

Country and population: General information

5. The Republic of Uzbekistan has an area of 448,900 sq. km and comprises the Republic of Karakalpakstan, 12 provinces and the city of Tashkent, and 163 rural districts.

6. The population at the beginning of 1999 numbered 24.2 million, of whom 9.1 million (37.8 per cent) lived in urban areas and 15.1 million (62.2 per cent) in villages and the countryside. The population density as on 1 January 1998 was 53.3 per sq. km. The total numbers of males and females are 11,819,900 (49.7 per cent) and 11,952,400 (50.3 per cent) respectively. Children below the age of 15 account for 42 per cent of the population.

7. Uzbekistan is home to more than 120 different nations and nationalities. The bulk of the population (77.2 per cent) are Uzbeks. Other nationalities, with populations constituting more than 1 per cent of the national total, include: 1.2 million Russian (5.2 per cent), 1.1 million Tajiks (4.8 per cent), 0.9 million Kazakhs (4.0 per cent) and 0.3 million Tatars (1.4 per cent).

8. The country's literacy rate is 99.1 per cent. Most illiterates are in the older population groups - aged 70 years and above. Only 0.3 per cent of males and females aged between 16 and 29 are illiterate. Of the population aged 65 and over, 30.2 per cent of women and 17.7 per cent of men are illiterate.

9. The educational level in Uzbekistan is reasonably high. Currently, of every 1,000 persons in employment, 986 have higher or specialized education. Of these, 142 (15 per cent) are specialists with full or partial higher education, 199 (21 per cent) have specialized secondary education, 480 (50.6 per cent) have general secondary education and 127 (13.4 per cent) have partial secondary education. There are more than 60 higher education establishments in Uzbekistan. One in four people working in the national economy has received higher or specialized secondary education.

10. In 1997, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) was 976.8 billion som, or 41,294 som per capita. The GDP deflator index in 1997 was 166.2 per cent. GDP increase in 1997 was 5.2 per cent with a per capita increase of 2.5 per cent. Average monthly inflation in 1997 was 6.1 per cent. Significant advances have been achieved thanks to the adoption and implementation of a number of social programmes. Thus, following implementation of the State gas supply programme, more than 60 million people now use natural gas and, as at the beginning of 1999, 72 per cent of the country's population centres had piped gas. The programme aims to increase that level to 86 per cent by 2010. With support from a number of developed countries, including Germany, Japan and the United States of America, a programme is under way in Uzbekistan to provide good quality drinking water to the population and desalination plants have been set in operation in those parts of the country with the severest water supply problems (Karakalpakstan, Khorezm province and others). In addition to these programmes, State programmes are being run in Uzbekistan for the training of professionals, overhauling the health sector, promoting the legal literacy of the general public, enhancing the role of women in the social and State sectors, developing fitness and sports, promoting family planning and in other areas.

11. According to Ministry of Labour figures, as at the end of 1998, of the total economically active population, 40,100 people were unemployed.

State political structure: Basic principles

12. The Republic of Uzbekistan was formed on 31 August 1991 on the territory of the former Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, a constituent part of the USSR. The country's accession to State independence and sovereignty set in motion a process of fundamental reforms and political transformations.

13. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted on 8 December 1992, reflects the aspirations, spirit, social awareness and culture of the people and enshrines its commitment to universal human values and the universally accepted principles and norms of international law. The Constitution incorporates the fundamental provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

14. The constitutional underpinning of the rights and freedoms of the individual provides the foundation for the new interrelationship between the individual and the State. At the current stage in the restructuring of the country's social and economic development, solid foundations have been laid for the conduct of far-reaching democratic reforms based on a recognition of the immanent worth of the human individual and of the unconditional priority of his or her rights and freedoms.

15. The Constitution establishes the principle of the division of powers into a legislature, executive and judiciary.

16. Legislative power is exercised by the Oliy Majlis, the Parliament of Uzbekistan, which is the supreme State representative body.

17. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan is the head of State and head of the country's executive. At the same time, the President serves as chair of the Cabinet of Ministers.

18. Judicial power is exercised by the system of judicial authorities, headed by:

(a) The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which considers cases relating to the constitutionality of formal decisions of the legislature and the executive;

(b) The Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the highest judicial body in the civil, criminal and administrative court hierarchy;

(c) The Higher Economic Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which settles disputes over economic matters.

PART II

General information

19. As far as its demographic situation is concerned, Uzbekistan has a number of very specific features. Over the period 1980-1989, mean annual population growth was 2.4 per cent and, over the period 1990-1998, 1.6 per cent. Compared with 1990 levels, the urban population increased by 10.3 per cent and the rural population by 25.4 per cent.

20. Uzbekistan's population growth is chiefly attributable to natural increase, i.e., a consistently high birth rate (553,000 children were born in 1998). This process is reinforced by the pattern of the growth rate, the principle determinant of population growth. Thus, for many years, the nationwide crude birth rate remained at the level of 33-34 per thousand, while in recent years it has dipped significantly - to 23.2 per thousand in 1998. Very high birth rates have been maintained only in the Surkhon-Darya, Qashqa-Darya, Jizzakh and Namangan provinces, in other words, in predominantly rural areas.

21. This drop in the birth rate is also reflected in birth rate figures for the different age groups. The birth rate for the age group 20-24 remains the highest, at 290-295 births per 1,000 women, while in the 25 - 29 age group it has stabilized at 250 - 255 births. In the other

age groups (30 - 49), the levels have declined. Ministry of Health data shows that infant mortality in 1998 was 21.7 per 1,000 live births and maternal mortality 28.6 per 100,000 live births.

22. The high birth rate, maintained over many years, has led to an increase in the population of the younger age groups. As on 1 January 1998, there were 11 million children aged under 18, constituting 48.2 per cent of the country's population.

23. Since the mid-1970s, the rate of population growth in the employable age groups has exceeded the growth rate for the population as a whole; accordingly, the proportion of those population groups in the country's population has grown. The population growth rate in employable age groups has been steady and their numbers increased from 10 million in 1990 to 14.2 million in 1998.

24. The population of the youngest employable age group, aged 15, is of particular importance for the development of demographic processes and for the growth of the country's workforce in the future. As at the beginning of 1998, this population group, numbering 3.1 million, constituted 22.5 per cent of the country's total population. The dynamics of this population group is an important factor in determining the country's future employment policies.

25. Another feature of comparable importance is the correlation between the employable population and the population of those in the immediate pre-retirement and post-retirement age groups. As at the beginning of 1997, the population of the pre-retirement age group (50-59) accounted for 9.8 per cent of the total employable population of the country, with 1.2 million, and that of the post-retirement age group (women over 54 and men over 59) for 7.7 per cent, with 1.7 million. The figure for 1990 was 1.6 million, representing 7.8 per cent of the population. Thus, the ageing of the country's population is not perceptible and any increase in the demographic load on the productive population is due to increase in the numbers of children.

26. The average family size in Uzbekistan is 5.5 persons, attributable to strong traditional methods for the planning and regulation of families, which have militated against the collapse of the family.

27. Economic situation: the geography of Uzbekistan is a combination of mountains and foothills, desert areas and fertile valleys, with a wealth of natural resources.

28. A total of 4.25 million hectares is currently under irrigation. There is a potential reserve of irrigated land of some 15 million hectares. With its soil and climate conditions, Uzbekistan can have three harvests a year. The country is fully able to meet its food needs with domestic production.

29. Uzbekistan is rich in minerals and raw materials and has the world's greatest resources of gold, silver and certain other rare metals. Some 100 different minerals have been identified in the country, concentrated in 2,700 deposits. Practically the entire Mendeleev periodic table is represented. According to information provided by foreign experts, Uzbekistan's total potential

in minerals and raw materials constitutes US$ 3.3 trillion. Every year, minerals to a value of some US$ 5.5 billion are mined, providing an annual growth in capital reserves of US$ 6-7 billion.

30. The country has large deposits of gas, oil and coal, and also extensive hydroelectric resources, which are of great importance for its economy. Nearly 74 per cent of the liquid gas resources of the entire Central Asian region, 31 per cent of its oil, 40 per cent of its natural gas and 55 per cent of its coal are to be found in Uzbekistan.

31. Industrial enterprises have been created and set in operation in Uzbekistan, covering virtually all sectors from heavy industry - engineering, aviation and motor vehicle construction - to branches of light industry and the industrial processing of agricultural produce and science-based production. Measures taken by the Government have enabled Uzbekistan to become self-sufficient in grain and oil.

32. The Republic of Uzbekistan boasts one of Central Asia's largest energy systems, with a total of 37 power stations. The electrical power generated at these stations not only meets the country's domestic needs, it is also exported to neighbouring States.

33. The main agricultural product is cotton. Every year, 4 million tonnes of cotton are harvested in Uzbekistan, from which 1.3 million tonnes of cotton fibre are prepared.

34. The combined length of the rail network of the country's national rail company, Uzbekiston Temir Yullari, is 3,655 km, with 680 km of dual track and 489 km of electrified line.

35. Uzbekistan's gas transport system comprises nine gas trunk lines with a total length of 12,000 km. The pipeline is a single-track system feeding into the common system of gas pipelines of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, through which gas can be supplied both to the countries of Central Asia, Russia and Ukraine and to those of Europe.

36. Major regional water supply systems have been laid in Uzbekistan with a total length of water pipelines of 1,400 km and an installed capacity of 1.6 million cum per day, sufficient to meet the industrial and drinking-water needs of all areas of the country.

37. Uzbekistan has a telecommunications network. More than 1.5 million subscribers use the country's telephone services.

38. Uzbekistan's construction sector has great potential, with the ability to carry out construction and assembly work to a total of 100-110 billion som (US$ 2.7-3 billion) per year.

39. Uzbekistan's transition to a market economy has entailed the development of new economic relations in the health-care system. Until recently, the State acted as the main guarantor of the provision of medical services. The sector's funding system, which was strictly centralized, and its outdated procedures for the sectoral redistribution of budgetary appropriations were conducive to the development of a health-care system heavily dependent on

hospital services, since the distribution of funding was pegged to the number of hospital beds: the more beds the more money allocated. This led to imbalances in the development of the health-care system. While outpatient services were poorly developed, more and more unneeded hospital places were provided. As much as 80 per cent of the health budget was allocated for the provision of hospital places. At the same time, these hospital places did not meet the most basic sanitary and medical service requirements since the area allocated per hospital bed was, a mere 1.5-2 sq. m, instead of the prescribed 7-9 sq. m.

40. In 1991-1992, the Ministry of Health, together with the Ministry of Finance, changed its approach to the funding of health care. Budgetary resources are now allocated on a per capita basis, the funding of outpatient centres and polyclinics is based on the number of people that they serve and that of hospitals on the number of patients. Introduction of these measures has brought a halt to the extensive development of a health sector heavily reliant on hospital services. The budget share allocated for the funding of hospital services has dropped from 80 to 60 per cent, in favour of outpatient services, where funding has increased from a mere 8-10 per cent to 30-40 per cent.

41. At the same time efforts have been made to generate extrabudgetary resources, primarily by developing a system of paid services. Currently more than 15,000 hospital places are managed on a self-financing basis. Paid services are also being developed in the outpatient sector, primarily involving treatment and recuperative services, denture work, cosmetic treatment and other diagnostic procedures.

42. The task of reforming the health-care sector, while remaining sensitive to changing trends in the general health of the population and accommodating an annual population growth of some 400,000-450,000, has necessitated the elaboration of a State programme for the development of health care over the period 1996-1998. The State programme includes the following measures:

Transforming the structure of the health-care system, with a view to bringing the work of the health-care establishments closer to that of general practitioners;

Enhancing the quality and effectiveness of medical care;

TB prevention and reduction programme;

Cancer prevention and reduction programme;

Safeguarding mother and child health;

Prevention and reduction of infectious diseases;

Health-care funding and economic restructuring of the health-care investment programme;

Construction of new facilities and major overhaul of the existing facilities in the health-care sector.

43. Implementation of this State programme has made it possible:

To improve outpatient and polyclinic coverage, to expand the more popular forms of medical care and to extend such care to 50 per cent of patients;

Substantially to enhance the quality and effectiveness of medical care, particularly in villages and the countryside;

To reduce the high rate of maternal mortality to a targeted 28.1 per 100,000 live births by the end of 1999 and infant mortality to 24.0 per 100,000 live births;

To cut infectious diseases, particularly those involving acute intestinal infections, by 30 per cent, to prevent the re-emergence of polio and to reduce outbreaks of diphtheria to a handful of cases;

To stabilize levels of TB infection and to reduce mortality from TB to 15 per cent;

To improve the early detection rate for various types of malignant tumour, to reduce one-year mortality rate from cancer by 10 per cent and to increase the five-year survival rate by 15 per cent;

To improve medication cover for the population and for medical establishments and to meet medical needs by 75 per cent, as against 59.5 per cent in 1995.

44. Pursuant to article 19 of the Public Health Care Act of 29 August 1996, which states that the rights of minors to health care shall be upheld by the State through the creation of the most favourable conditions for their physical and mental development and for the prevention of diseases and through the provision of medical care in pre-school centres, schools and other establishments, minors have the right to:

Outpatient observation and treatment in preventive-care and treatment centres for children and adolescents in the manner prescribed by the Ministry of Health;

Instruction in health and hygiene and conditions for their education and work appropriate to their particular physiological condition and health state;

Free medical consultations, the cost to be borne by the State budget, where it is established that they are unfit to work;

The provision of necessary information on their state of health and on the general health and epidemiological situation in a form which they can understand;

Free inoculation against manageable infections, following an inoculation schedule.

45. Minors over the age of 14 have the right to voluntary informed consent to medical intervention or to refuse such intervention.

General measures of implementation

46. On 9 December 1992, the Supreme Council of the Republic ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Republic of Uzbekistan entered into a commitment to observe all its provisions and to shoulder its responsibility before the international community. Various legislative, administrative and other steps have been taken in Uzbekistan with a view to bringing the State policy on children into line with the provisions of the Convention.

47. The development of a physically healthy generation requires guaranteed, balanced and nutritious feeding, particularly for very young children. This issue remains a cause of great concern, and all the more so in remote areas. For this purpose, it is essential that Uzbekistan has access to environmentally sound infant foods and to sterilized milk, acidophilous preparations and other clotted milk products and that its food industry include the manufacture of fruit and vegetable preserves, purées, juices and other drinks.

48. The safeguarding (survival), development and protection of children in Uzbekistan, including protection of their rights, freedoms and lawful interests, are strictly monitored by the State. Thanks to extensive support from the State, considerable progress has been made in upholding the rights of children. This is particularly evident in sport, where youth teams from Uzbekistan are among the best in the continent in such sports as football, boxing, karate, wrestling and chess.

49. The legal status of children in Uzbekistan is governed by the following statutory instruments: the Family Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 30 April 1998; the Code of Administrative Liability; the Civil Code of 29 August 1996; the Criminal Code of 22 September 1994; the Labour Code and other codes; the Citizenship Act of 2 July 1992; the Media Act of 14 June 1991; the Youth (Amendments and Supplements) Act of 6 May 1995; the Education Act of 29 August 1997; the Public Health Act of 29 August 1996; the Disabled Persons (Social Security) Act; the Housing Policy Act of 1999 and a number of other statutes.

50. A working group has been set up in Uzbekistan to study the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to monitor its implementation.

51. To promote implementation, a presidential order was adopted on 9 December 1998 on the elaboration of a programme of measures to strengthen the role of women in the family and in the development of the State and society. A national commission has also been set up to elaborate a programme of measures to strengthen the role of women in the family and in developing the State and society. The programme envisages activities to improve the legal framework for protecting the interests of women, motherhood and childhood, to set in place conditions to strengthen the health of mothers and children and to ensure the active participation of women in the process of economic restructuring and reform, and many other measures.

52. The Women's Supplementary Benefits Act of 14 April 1999 opens new possibilities for enhancing the situation of Uzbek women, by furthering implementation of the measures prescribed in the presidential decree on supplementary measures to strengthen the social protection of women and the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of 17 March 1999, on the provision of tax concessions to women employed in jobs with particularly unhealthy and difficult working conditions.

53. Particular attention is given in Uzbekistan to the issue of the social integration and rehabilitation of disabled children. Decision 433 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 11 November 1995 on the 1996-2000 State programme for the rehabilitation of the disabled in Uzbekistan stipulates basic measures to prevent children's disability and to ensure the medical and social rehabilitation of the disabled and their living conditions; to provide vocational training and job placement for the disabled; and to promote employment for the disabled. More than 40 ministries, departments, foundations and other voluntary organizations are involved in the implementation of this programme. The programme envisages measures to prevent disability, to ensure the medical and social rehabilitation of the disabled, to train them in various special fields and to provide physical training for them, and it also provides for the training of professionals to work with the disabled, for the manufacture of prosthetic appliances and for other measures related to the rehabilitation of the disabled. Thirteen disabled rehabilitation centres have been set up in different parts of the country for the purpose of implementing the programme.

54. National programmes have been elaborated and are currently being implemented in such areas as the health of women of childbearing age, the general health of the younger generation, the creation of a State mother-and-child screening system and other youth health problems.

55. The Oliy Majlis (Parliament) has adopted its Commissioner for Human Rights Act and on 30 April 1998 it adopted the Family Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

56. It is impossible to ensure genuine protection of the rights and freedoms of children without an extensive campaign to publicize the basic standards of international law in the field of human rights. Accordingly, the Uzbek Government is giving particular attention to legal awareness-raising measures among the public, and in particular for children. On 7 June 1998, a presidential decree was adopted on promoting the legal literacy of the general public, and legal awareness-raising centres have been set up as part of the local Ministry of Justice officers, for the purpose of implementing this decree in the country's provincial centres.

57. In 1996 and 1997, four national human rights institutions were created: the Oliy Majlis (Parliamentary) Commissioner for Human Rights; the Oliy Majlis Institute for Monitoring Current Legislation; the National Human Rights Centre; and the Ijtimoiy Fikr Public Opinion Centre. The activities of these institutions are geared towards the protection of human rights and freedoms and, in particular, the rights of the child.

58. The following authorities are responsible for ensuring protection of the rights and interests of the child in Uzbekistan:

(a) At the national level:

(i) The highest State authorities and administrative bodies, namely, the President of the Republic, the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

(ii) Within the Oliy Majlis: the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights;

(iii) Within the Cabinet of Ministers: the Women's Affairs Committee, the Minority Affairs Commission; and the Religious Affairs Committee;

(iv) National Human Rights Centre;

(v) Ministries and departments, on issues falling within their respective areas of jurisdiction.

(b) At the local level:

(i) Care and guardianship bodies within the local authorities, local minority affairs commissions, etc.;

(ii) Procurators' offices;

(iii) General courts;

(iv) Non-profit non-governmental organizations.

59. Protection of the rights and interests of children is the concern not only of State but also of public (non-governmental) organizations, both charities and human rights bodies. These include, for example, the Women's Committee, the Mass Media Democratization Foundation, the Soglom Avlod Uchun, Umid, Ustoz and Kamolot Foundations, the advocates' and judges' associations, the Association of Women Entrepreneurs and many others.

60. The Kamolot youth foundation works to promote all aspects of the development of the younger generation through its participation in social protection work for young people and by ensuring the necessary conditions for their education. The foundation is a self-financing non-governmental organization.

61. The Government is conducting an awareness-raising exercise among the younger generation, to foster among them respect for traditions and customs and to open their eyes to the dangers of fundamentalism and wahhabism.

62. Beginning with the 1998 school year, more than 630,000 school kits costing a total of 767 million som were issued to first-graders. From the same funds, sets of winter clothing were provided to 373,000 pupils in primary grades from lower-income families, to a total value of 1,072 million som. The level of material assistance provided by the State to low-income families increased by 80 per cent to an average per family of 1,070 som. More than 14 per cent of all families received such assistance.

63. The existing system for supporting low-income families is heavily geared towards assisting families with children, primarily large families. Families with children account for some 80 per cent of all the benefits. The benefit is reasonably high, ranging from 1.5 to 3 times the minimum salary. In 1996, more than 10 per cent of all families living in Uzbekistan received these benefits. The procedures for the allocation and payment of both types of benefit have much in common and allocation of the one benefit does not preclude allocation of the other. It should also be noted that minors from low-income families attend children's holiday camps free of charge, the cost borne from State funds.

64. In the implementation of the social support programme for low-income sectors of the population, particular stress has been placed on the payment of benefits to families with children. Where previously children's benefits were paid to all families, irrespective of their financial situation, from 1 January 1997 these benefits have been reserved for low-income families, and allocated by the mahallya committees.

65. In 1993 the international non-governmental charitable foundation Soglom Avlod Uchun ("for a Healthy Generation") was founded. Its primary tasks are the following:

To renovate the country's institutions for obstetric and gynaecological care and children's institutions, building up their material and technical base and providing up-to-date equipment;

To ensure the protection of maternal and child health through the national health and fitness programme for the young people of Uzbekistan;

To develop and extend international cooperation in the area of the protection of motherhood and childhood.

The foundation carries out its various projects through its 14 provincial divisions and more than 100 focal points and in this way has become active in nearly all the districts of the country.

66. Among the organizations active in Uzbekistan are the Ekosan, Mahallya, Kamolot and Umid foundations, whose activities include measures to safeguard the rights of children.

Legal status of the child

67. As stated in article 1 of the Convention: "legal status of the child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier". Uzbekistan recognizes the need for proper legal protection for the interests of the child and for constant concern for the welfare of children, so as to improve the living conditions of children in the country. Accordingly, there are no fundamental differences between the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Uzbek legislation with regard to the legal status of children.

68. Pursuant to article 17 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the corresponding provisions of other Uzbek codes, the passive capacity of citizens commences at birth.

69. Article 22 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan establishes that citizens attain full active capacity at the age of majority, i.e., 18. A citizen who has lawfully married before the age of majority attains full active capacity from the moment of such marriage. Under the provisions of the Family Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan marriageable age is set for men at 18 and for women at 17 and in exceptional circumstances may be lowered, by decision of the hokimiyat, but by no more than one year.

70. Article 28 of the Civil Code stipulates that minors who have reached the age of 16 and are working under an employment contract or are engaged in entrepreneurial activity with the consent of their parents, may be considered to have attained full active capacity (emancipation).

71. According to article 27 of the Civil Code, minors aged between 14 and 18 are entitled, independently and without the consent of their parents, adoptive parents or guardians:

(a) To dispose of their own earnings, education grants and other income;

(b) To exercise the rights of authors of works of science, literature and art, of inventions or of any other result of their intellectual activity;

(c) In accordance with the law, to invest in credit institutions and to dispose of such investments;

(d) To conduct minor personal transactions and other transactions designed to secure profit without remuneration which do not require notarial authorization or State registration.

72. They are also permitted to conduct transactions with the use of resources provided to them for that particular purpose or for them to dispose of at will.

73. Children aged between 6 and 14 are entitled independently to conduct minor personal transactions and transactions designed to secure profit without remuneration which do not require notarial authorization or State registration. They are also entitled to conduct transactions involving resources that have been made available to them.

PART III

General principles: Non-discrimination (art. 2)

74. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Uzbek legislation governing the legal status of citizens resident in Uzbekistan (in particular, the Citizenship Act of the Republic of Uzbekistan) accord to children all the rights enshrined in the Convention, without discrimination as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status of the child, of the child's parents or legal guardians, or any other considerations.

75. Article 6 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which entered into force on 1 April 1996, stipulates that distinctions in the employment area attributable to specific requirements of a particular job or the particular concern of the State for people needing extra social protection (women, minors, the disabled and others) shall not be deemed to be discrimination.

76. The Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act of 1 May 1998 provides for the protection of the rights and interests of all citizens, including children, without regard to their attitude to religion. The imposition of any direct or indirect restriction on the rights of citizens and the granting of any privileges on the basis of religious affiliation, as well as the incitement to religious hostility and hatred or acts offending the religious sensibilities of citizens shall be punishable by law.

77. The Code of Criminal Procedure of the Republic of Uzbekistan governs the procedure by which justice is administered in Uzbekistan, on the basis of the equality of all citizens before the law and the courts, without regard to origin, social, official and property status, racial and national affiliation, sex, education, language, attitude to religion, form and nature of employment, place of residence and other circumstances.

78. The right of citizens to education is defined in a similar manner by the Education Act. This act guarantees the right to education without regard to race, nationality, language, sex, age, state of health, social, property and official status, social origin, place of residence, attitude to religion, beliefs, party affiliation and criminal record.

79. Difficulties often arise, however, in the application of these principles enshrined in law, due to the processes of transition to a market economy and the commercialization of the medical, educational and leisure sectors, with the resulting reduced accessibility of those sectors.

Best interests of the child (art. 3)

80. This provision is codified in current legislation. Articles 41 and 42 of the Constitution establish the right to education, the freedom of scientific and technical work, and the right to use the achievements of culture. Article 75 of the Family Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan

obliges parents to render moral and material assistance to children. Uzbek law also establishes the right of children to appeal to the care and guardianship authorities for the protection of their rights and interests, in the event that these have been breached by their parents or by persons acting in their stead.

81. A procedure has been established under which in exceptional cases or where there is direct threat to the life or health of a child the care and guardianship authorities are entitled to take a decision on the immediate removal of a child from the child's parents or from other persons under whose care the child had been placed. In such circumstances the care and guardianship authorities shall be obliged without delay to bring an action in the courts against one or both parents for the deprivation of their parental rights or for the removal of the child.

82. The principle of the best interests of the child is also respected in the Family Code. This establishes that parents are obliged to raise their children with due care for their physical development and their education. For the accomplishment of this task parents are accorded the corresponding rights, including the right to raise their children themselves. At the same time, to protect the interests of the child, certain limits are placed on the exercise of those parental rights, which may not be exercised in a manner contrary to the child's best interests.

83. Information on measures to ensure that institutions and departments responsible for the welfare and protection of children conform to the established standards may be found in the respective sections of the report relating to specific activities in this area.

Right to life, survival and development (art. 6)

84. This right is guaranteed by the provisions contained in article 24 of the Constitution, while article 72 of the Family Code vests in parents the responsibility to raise their children and to take due care of their physical development and education.

85. Given that infant mortality rates in Uzbekistan were relatively high, at 21.7 per 1,000 live births, the State policy to reduce mortality among children is designed to attack the causes behind these high rates. This primarily involves measures to control the consequences of the environmental crisis caused by the desiccation of the Aral Sea. Additional resources are being assigned to the Aral region to improve its health and hygiene status; a programme has been elaborated with the World Bank to ensure the supply of safe drinking water to the population of the Aral region; investments are being mobilized to develop the social infrastructure in the region. Steps are also being taken to improve the medical care for children in other areas of the country. A number of children's welfare non-governmental organizations have been set up, the most important of which include the Soglom Avlod Uchun and Ekosan foundations. In response to the uncontrolled growth of the birth rate, which is one of the main factors behind the growth in the infant mortality rate, the State is conducting measures to promote family planning, the availability of contraceptives and the distribution of easy-to-read literature on preventing unwanted pregnancies.

86. Due account has been taken of traditional systems used in Uzbekistan to control the raising of children. Measures have been elaborated to revive these systems as a means of supporting large families, which have been hardest hit by the transition from the semi-patriarchal system to the market economy. One of these traditional systems is the mahallya - a community of several families or households unified on a territorial basis. The mahallya, which functions as the organ of local authority, channels assistance to needy large families and performs the traditional function of monitoring the education and upbringing of the younger generation. In addition, a special Mahallya Foundation has been established, whose responsibilities also include promoting optimal conditions for the development of children.

Respect for the views of the child (art. 12)

87. Articles 29 and 43-45 of the Constitution establish and guarantee the right to freedom of thought, word and belief. The Education Act of the Republic of Uzbekistan reaffirms the humanistic nature of education, accords priority to the free development of the individual, outlaws the imposition in education of any ideological beliefs and thereby ensures the free development of children and the free expression of their views.

88. The right to free expression by children of their views is upheld in judicial practice. Thus, the new Criminal Code makes provision for the participation in the questioning of young offenders of a teacher or a psychologist (art. 554). The Family Code prescribes that due account shall be taken of the child's personal opinion in considering issues related to the determination of paternity, changes of first name or surname and adoption matters. In taking its decision, the court is obliged to take due account of the opinion of the child.

89 The State accords particular attention to the need to guarantee that children enjoy genuine freedom of conscience. Most legal rules in this area are governed by the provisions of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act. Article 7 of the Act stipulates that the educational system in the Republic of Uzbekistan shall be kept separate from religion. Religious subjects may not be included in educational syllabuses. The right to secular education is guaranteed for citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan without regard to their attitude to religion. The new version of the Act (of 1 May 1998) strictly prohibits any attempt forcibly to impose religious views on children.

90. Citizens are admitted to institutions of higher and secondary religious education after completion of their obligatory general secondary education in compliance with the Education Act of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Persons teaching religious subjects in religious educational establishments must have a religious education and must obtain permission of the appropriate central administrative authority for the exercise of their teaching activities. The teaching of religious dogma on a private basis is prohibited.

91. The remaining problems in this area are attributable to the lack of a system for the provision of information and the raising of awareness, which would familiarize both the children themselves and teachers and psychologists with the rights of children to the free expression of their views.

Civil rights and freedoms: Name and nationality (art. 7)

92. Citizenship issues are governed by provisions in the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (chap. VI), and the Citizenship Act of 2 July 1992 (arts. 13-16, 22-28). Under the Act (art. 1), citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan determines the permanent, political and legal relationship between the individual and the State, as expressed in their mutual rights and duties. No restrictions are placed on rights on the basis of the grounds on which they were obtained, or on the basis of origin, social and property status, racial and national affiliation, sex, education, attitude to religion, political and other convictions, and form and nature of employment.

93 The following are deemed to be citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan: first, persons who, at the time of the entry into force of the Citizenship Act (1992), were permanently resident in the Republic of Uzbekistan; second, persons working on State business outside the Republic of Uzbekistan who are citizens of no other State; and, third, those who have acquired citizenship in accordance with the Act.

94. The right of children to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and the right to know and be cared for by their parents, referred to in article 7 of the Convention, is governed in national legislation by articles 76 and 77 of the Family Code and articles 19 and 1171 of the Civil Code, which also makes reference to the right to a surname and patronymic and to the possibility, in cases prescribed by law, of the use of pseudonym.

95. Article 20 of the Civil Code establishes the procedure for the protection of a person's name. Article 21 establishes that the place of residence of minors below the age of 14 or who have been placed in care shall be deemed to be the place of residence of their lawful representatives, whether parents, guardians or adoptive parents.

Preservation of identity and protection of privacy (arts. 8 and 16)

96. Chapters V, VII and IX of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan protect privacy and guarantee the preservation of identity.

97. The life, health, rights and freedoms of children are placed under the protection of the law. In the first section of its specific provisions, the Criminal Code establishes criminal liability for crimes against the individual. Encroachments on the life and health of minors are deemed to be aggravating circumstances.

98. Particular prominence is given in the Criminal Code to the rule of law protecting children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (art. 128 covers sexual relations with persons under 16, article 129 sexual abuse of persons under the age of 16, article 131 the keeping of establishments of ill-repute and procurement involving minors and article. 135, paragraph (c) the recruitment of minors for the purposes of sexual or other exploitation). Article 130 of the Criminal Code provides criminal liability for the preparation or dissemination of pornographic materials to persons under the age of 21.

99. The mahallya cooperates closely with local internal affairs bodies, procurators' offices and justice departments in combating the spread of drug addiction and alcoholism among children and various joint measures are being conducted for that purpose. Where young people are found to be behaving in an anti-social manner, their parents and teachers are summoned to a meeting of the mahallya to discuss how to correct their behaviour.

100. Persons found to have had sexual contact with minors are subject to criminal penalties.

Freedom of expression and freedom of thought, conscience and religion (arts. 13 and 14)

101. Articles 29 and 31 of the Constitution guarantee the freedom of conscience and religion. These same issues are regulated by the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act of 1 May 1998. The purpose of the act is to give effect to the right of every citizen to freedom of conscience and religion, and to the equality of citizens without regard to their attitude to religion, as well as to regulate aspects of the work of religious organizations.

102. There are four religious centres currently in operation in Uzbekistan: the Islamic Theological Board of Maverannahr, the Central Asian Russian Orthodox Church Board, the Central Asian Church of Seventh Day Adventists and the Central Asian Church of Biblical Baptist Christians. Their legal status is governed by the norms and general principles of international humanitarian law and by the legislation of Uzbekistan.

103. Data issued by the Ministry of Justice show that, at the beginning of 1999, applications had been received from 1,697 religious organizations, of which 1,599 were Muslim, 127 Christian and 11 of other denominations. As on 5 August 1999, 1,702 religious organizations had been registered, of which 1,566 were Muslim, 136 Christian (including 30 Orthodox, 16 Evangelical Baptist, 18 Full Evangelist, 9 Seventh Day Adventist, 3 Evangelical, 3 Roman Catholic, 1 Armenian Apostolic and 44 Korean Protestant), 8 Jewish, 3 Baha'i and 1 Bible Society. About 80 applications are still under consideration.

104. Under article 3 of the Act, freedom of conscience is the guaranteed constitutional right of citizens to profess any religion or to profess none. According to data from the Religious Affairs Committee in the Cabinet of Ministers, in August 1999 the Higher Islamic Institute alone had 757 students. All in all, there are nine specialized religious colleges in Uzbekistan, with a total of 1,199 students, 345 of whom are girls. The diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church has its own theological seminary, with 13 students.

105. Citizens shall not be subject to any coercion in determining their attitude to religion, and in deciding whether or not to profess any faith, to participate in worship, religious rites and ceremonies and to receive religious education. Minors may not be recruited by religious organizations nor may they be taught religion against their will or the will of their parents or persons acting in their stead.

106. The exercise of the freedom to profess a religion or other beliefs is subject only to such restrictions as are essential to ensure national security and public order and to safeguard the life, health, morals, rights and freedoms of other citizens.

Access to appropriate information (art. 17)

107. Article 30 of the Constitution obliges State authorities, voluntary associations and officials to grant citizens access to documents, decisions and other materials. The Information (Guarantees and Freedom of Access) Act regulates matters arising in the process of giving effect to the constitutional right of every citizen, freely and without hindrance, to seek, obtain, study, transmit and disseminate information. The act guarantees every citizen the right of access to information. The State safeguards this right. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Uzbek National Support Centre houses a public library on human rights, with more than 300 holdings. Any citizen who wishes may have access to literature in the field of human rights protection. UNDP staff have compiled a catalogue of the literature in the library.

Freedom of association and of peaceful assembly (art. 15)

108. Articles 33 and 34 of the Constitution provide the right to peaceful assembly, to form trade unions, political parties and other voluntary associations, and to participate in mass movements, and the Voluntary Associations Act, the Political Parties Act, the Non-Profit Non-Governmental Organizations Act, the Trade Unions (Rights and Guarantees) Act and a number of other legislative instruments help flesh out these rights. By their special nature - i.e. age and immaturity - children are as a rule precluded from active participation in political processes. Accordingly, Uzbek legislation establishes a minimum age for political activity; for Uzbek citizens the minimum age of active and passive suffrage is 18 (the legal age of majority).

Prevention of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of children (arts. 37 and 39)

109. The benign disposition of the Uzbek State is manifested in the inclusion in article 555 of the Uzbek Code of Criminal Procedure, alongside other preventive measures, of the following: pledge of good conduct, personal suretyship, suretyship of a voluntary association or collective, release against payment of a deposit, release under surveillance. Minors may also be placed under the supervision of their parents, guardians, wardens, or, where applicable, persons in charge of the children's institutions in which they are being raised.

110. Under article 558 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, remand in custody may only be applicable as a preventive measure in exceptional circumstances, when a minor has been charged of the commission of a crime carrying a possible sentence of deprivation of liberty for a period of more than three years and when other preventive measures will not ensure the desired behaviour by the minor in question.

Family environment and alternative care: Parental guidance (art. 5)

111. Due attention is given in Uzbekistan to the responsibility, rights and obligations of parents, to the role of members of the extended family and the community and to parental control and guidance of children in the exercise of their rights, as enshrined in the Convention, in accordance with their evolving capacities.

112. The rights of parents and children are governed by articles 65-75 of the Family Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan and by the corresponding articles of the Civil Code.

113. Specific provisions of this act (art. 82) protect the rights of parents and, at the same time, determine their duties and responsibilities with regard to raising their children, caring for their physical development and education and preparing them for socially useful work.

Parental responsibilities (art. 18)

114. The Family Code stipulates the responsibility of parents to ensure the all-round development of their children and to raise them in a spirit of patriotism and respect for their country. The mahallyas (associations of families living in the same area) conduct special meetings to discuss matters relating to the way families are raising their children. At these meetings parents are instructed in their obligation to provide for the health of their children, for their good conduct and for their schooling. Parents who are not giving sufficient attention to these matters receive public reprimands. In addition, the raising and maintenance of children is constantly monitored by the minors' affairs commissions in the hokimiyats, which are entitled, in cases where parents have been insufficiently attentive or have failed to attend to their duties, to move for the deprivation of their parental rights, an act which entails specific legal consequences.

Separation from parents and family reunification (arts. 9 and 10)

115. The State ensures that children reside with their parents except in cases where the competent authorities, pursuant to a judicial decision, have determined in accordance with the legally prescribed procedures that it is in the child's own best interests to be separated from his or her parents, namely, in cases where parents are maltreating or neglecting the child or where in the event of the separation of the parents, a decision must be taken, regarding the place of residence of the child.

116. Such issues as the separation of children from their parents, the consequences of the deprivation of parental rights, visitation rights, and the restoration of parental rights and the procedure for addressing these issues are governed by articles 83-94 of the Family Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

117. One or both parents may be deprived of their parental rights if they:

Refuse to perform their duties, including the obligation to pay alimony;

Refuse, without valid cause, to collect their child from maternity homes (wards) or any other medical establishment, child-care establishment, social welfare institution or similar institution;

Misuse their parental rights and mistreat their children, including with the use of physical or mental violence;

Suffer from chronic alcoholism or drug addiction;

Have committed deliberate crimes against the life or health of their children or against the life or health of their spouse.

118. Deprivation of parental rights is ordered by the courts. Suits for the deprivation of parental rights may be brought by one of the parents (or persons acting in their stead) or the procurator and also by the authorities or institutions responsible for protecting the rights of minor children (care and guardianship authorities, minors' affairs commissions, orphanages and children's homes, and others).

119. Proceedings for the deprivation of parental rights are conducted in the presence of the procurator and the care and guardianship authorities. In conducting proceedings for the deprivation of parental rights the court shall decide on the award of alimony for the maintenance of the child against the parents (or the one parent) deprived of their parental rights.

120. If in the conduct of proceedings for the deprivation of parental rights the court should detect in the actions of the parents (or of one parent) evidence of criminal deeds, it shall be obliged to notify the procurator thereof.

121. The court is obliged, within three days of the entry into force of a court decision on the deprivation of parental rights, to transmit a transcript of this court decision to the civil registry office where the birth of the child was registered.

122. Parents deprived of their parental rights shall forfeit all rights contingent upon their kinship with the child in respect of which they have been deprived of parental rights, including the right to receive maintenance from the child and also the right to any privileges and benefits granted under law to citizens with children.

123. Deprivation of parental rights does not exempt the parents from the obligation to maintain their child.

124. The issue of the continued cohabitation of a child and the parents (or the one parent) deprived of their parental rights shall be resolved by the court in accordance with the procedure established by the housing legislation.

125. A child in respect of whom parents (or one parent) have been deprived of their parental rights shall retain title to housing or the rights to occupy housing and shall also retain property rights contingent upon kinship with the parents and with other relatives, including the right to receive inheritances, except where such child is adopted.

126. Where it is not possible to transfer the child to the other parent or where both parents have been deprived of their parental rights, the child shall be placed in care.

127. Where the parents (or one parent) have been deprived of their parental rights, adoption of the child shall not be permitted before the expiry of six months from the date of the court decision on the deprivation of the parental rights.

128. The alimony rights and obligations of parents and children and also of other relatives are comprehensively covered by articles 95-109 and 110-119 of the Family Code.

129. District and municipal courts in Uzbekistan consider and settle civil cases to determine the place of residence of children, the award of alimony, the deprivation of parental rights and other matters relating to the interests and rights of children.

130. The mahallyas make comprehensive efforts to promote the strengthening of families, working not only to ensure their integrity, but also the all-round development of children. With the break-up of families, there is a growing number of abandoned children and the mahallya places these children under the responsibility of the care and guardianship authorities who in turn place them in appropriate children's facilities.

Children deprived of a family environment (art. 20)

131. Vigorous efforts are being made in Uzbekistan to provide social support for children deprived of a family environment. Extensive work is being conducted in this area by the international non-governmental foundation Soglom Avlod Uchun. With support from this foundation and on its initiative, a system of SOS children's villages is being set up in Uzbekistan, with a view to building and equipping children's villages for orphans, which will be fully funded by the international association SOS Kinderdorf International. On the foundation's initiative, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted its decision No. 585 of 31 December 1997, establishing the international charitable association SOS Children's Villages of Uzbekistan. The first such village has already been built in Tashkent and was officially opened in July 1999.

132. Support for disabled children is also a constant concern of non-governmental organizations. Since 1996, Soglom Avlod Uchun, working together with the Engrag Foundation of the Republic of Korea, has conducted yearly children's art competitions on the theme: "Enchanting world of colour".

133. In August 1999 the highest award of the World Health Organization (WHO) was conferred on Uzbekistan for its outstanding achievements in ensuring the comprehensive protection of motherhood and childhood.

134. In addition to a number of specific practical measures identified by major international organizations in Uzbekistan, a highly effective system has been set up for ensuring legislative safeguards of the rights of children deprived of a family environment. Children in such situations are placed under care and guardianship (arts. 165-215 of the Family Code) and extensive material and moral support is also provided to the child by the mahallya. The care and guardianship authorities are also responsible for protecting the rights and interests of children in the event of the death of parents, the deprivation or restriction of parents' parental rights, the declaration of parents as incapable, the illness or extended absence of parents, the refusal of parents to raise their children or to protect their rights and interests, including the refusal of parents to collect their children from childcare, medical, social welfare and other similar institutions and in other instances where parental care is lacking.

135. Uzbek legislation has a special provision codifying the procedure for the identification and registration of children deprived of parental care (art. 149). The care and guardianship authorities identify children deprived of parental care, keep a register of such children and, in the light of the specific circumstances under which parental care has been lost, select the appropriate type of care for the children thus affected and also ensure follow-up monitoring of the conditions in which those children are kept, raised and educated.

136. Apart from the care and guardianship authorities, no other legal entities or individuals are permitted to conduct activities to identify and resettle children deprived of parental care.

137. The officials of institutions, such as pre-school, centres and general educational, medical and other establishments, and other citizens in possession of information about children deprived of parental care are obliged to convey such information to the care and guardianship authorities in the areas where the children are located. The care and guardianship authorities must, within three days of the receipt of such information, investigate the living conditions of the child and, should they establish that the child has been deprived of the care of parents or relatives, shall ensure the protection of the child's rights and interests until such time as a decision has been reached on where the child will live.

Adoption (art. 21)

138. Uzbekistan recognizes the existence of the system of adoption and takes steps to ensure that the child's interests are taken into account as a matter of priority and that adoption is only permitted by the responsible authority in accordance with the legally prescribed procedures and on the basis of all relevant and verified information. These provisions are contained in articles 151-172 of the Family Code. Adoption is only permitted in respect of minor children and only when it is in their interest.

139. Adoption takes place on the decision of the district or municipal hokim, following an application by the persons wishing to adopt the child and the recommendation of the care and guardianship authorities. The law defines which persons are capable of being adoptive parents (art. 152). Adoptive parents may be citizens of either sex of majority age with the exception of the following: persons deprived of their parental rights or whose parental rights have been restricted; persons who have been declared under the law to be incapable or of limited legal capacity; persons registered with psychiatric institutions or drug treatment centres; persons who have previously adopted children and where such adoption was nullified on grounds established by law; persons convicted of the wilful commission of crimes.

140. The difference in age between the adopting party and the adoptee should not be less than 15 years except where adoption is by stepfather and stepmother.

141. The secret of adoption is protected by law. Under Uzbek legislation, it is forbidden to disclose the contents of the records of registry offices or of other documents or to issue extracts there from or any other information revealing that the adoptive parents are not the birth parents of the adopted child, without the consent of the adoptive parents and, in the event of their death, of the care and guardianship authorities.

142. Persons disclosing the secret of adoption against the will of the adoptive parent or the care and guardianship authorities shall incur the liability established by law. In awarding adoption, preference shall be given to: relatives of the adoptive child, irrespective of their place of residence; a person in whose family the adopted child has been living; persons adopting brothers and sisters, without disrupting the family ties between them; step-parents; citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan; persons who have lost their own children through illness or accident.

143. For the adoption of a child aged 10 and over, the child's own consent is required. The consent of a child to adoption is established by the care and guardianship authorities. If the child is being raised in the adoptive parents' family and considers them to be his or her own parents, adoption may proceed without the adopted child's consent.

144. A special adoption procedure obtains in respect of children being raised and maintained in State children's homes: where the parents' consent is not required, adoption takes place with the consent of the administration of such institutions.

145. Adopted children have the same personal and property rights as the natural children of the adoptive parent.

146. Adopted children and their parents (or relatives of the parents) forfeit their individual and property rights and obligations vis-à-vis one another. Minor children who, at the time of their adoption, are entitled to a pension or benefit accruing to them from the loss of a breadwinner, retain this entitlement after adoption. The surname, first name and patronymic of a child aged 10 and over may only be changed with the child's own consent.

147. In accordance with current legislation in Uzbekistan, an adopted child enjoys all civil rights on the same footing as the biological children of the adoptive parents, including the right of inheritance (art. 1134 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan). In addition to adoption, Uzbekistan also has the institution of foster care (arts. 194-200 of the Family Code). Under this system, minor children deprived of parental care, including those in child-care, medical and social welfare establishments, are placed in the care of a foster family.

148. The preliminary selection of children for placement in foster families is made by the persons wishing to receive such children into their family, in consultation with the care and guardianship authorities. The wishes of the children themselves are taken into account when they are being placed in foster families. Children aged 10 and over may only be placed in foster families with their own consent. The procedure and conditions for placing children in foster families are laid down by law.

149. Childless families may only foster children from children's homes and "Mehribonlik" homes on the recommendation of the mahallya. Thereafter mahallya officials carefully monitor the conditions in which the child is being raised and maintained, the child's state of health and the foster parents' relationship with the child.

Illicit transfer and non-return (art. 11)

150. The Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan establishes criminal liability for the abduction of people, including children. The abduction of a person in the absence of the circumstances stipulated in article 245 of the Code is punishable by deprivation of liberty for periods of between three and five years. The same act committed:

(a) Against a minor;

(b) For the purposes of gain or for other nefarious motives;

(c) By prior conspiracy of a group of persons;

(d) Repeatedly or by a dangerous repeat offender

is punishable by deprivation of liberty for a period of between 5 and 10 years, with or without the confiscation of property. The same act:

(a) Committed by a particularly dangerous repeat offender;

(b) Involving serious consequences

is punishable by deprivation of liberty for a period of between 10 and 15 years, with or without the confiscation of property.

152. The Criminal Code also establishes liability for the abduction of persons as hostages. The abduction or detention of a person as a hostage for the purpose of coercing a State, international organization, legal entity or individual to perform or to refrain from the performance of any action, as a condition for the freeing of the hostage, in the absence of the circumstances stipulated in articles 155 and 165 of the code, is punishable by deprivation of liberty for a period of between 5 and 10 years with the confiscation of property. The same act:

(a) Committed against a minor;

(b) Committed against two or more persons;

(c) Involving serious consequences

are punishable by deprivation of liberty for periods of between 10 and 15 years, with the confiscation of property.

Periodic review of placement (art. 25)

153. Guidelines on this issue are currently being developed by the Ministry of Health.

154. Relatives, neighbours or close friends may take orphaned children into their care. In such cases, a prominent member of the mahallya shall be responsible for monitoring the situation of the child in the family and shall periodically report thereon to meetings of the mahallya.

Information on certain groups of children

155. Over the years since independence, the Republic of Uzbekistan has carried out a number of measures to strengthen the social protection of disabled children. On 1 April 1988 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a decision on the creation of a State mother and child screening system for the early detection of congenital and other pathologies in newborn children and pregnant women, with a view to preventing the birth of disabled children. The organization of the screening centres is based on the number of existing care and prevention establishments. The centres are funded from the budgetary appropriations for health care and from donations.

156. It should be noted that 59.4 per cent of all the country's disabled live in rural areas. The highest disability rates are recorded in environmentally disturbed areas: 80.3 per cent in Surhon-Darya province - 80.3 per cent; Bukhara province - 65.4 per cent; Khorezm province - 79.5 per cent; Jizzakh province - 69.2 per cent; and Qashqa-Darya province - 73.1 per cent.

157. On 18 November 1991 the Disabled (Social Welfare) Act was adopted and on 3 September 1993, the State Pension Act. That same year the Social Insurance Fund was set up, to provide funding for pensions and benefits.

158. Preparatory work has been carried out to set up centres in Fergana province and the city of Tashkent for the medical and social rehabilitation of the disabled with musculo-skeletal and motor function impairments. In the cities of Margilan and Kuva work has started on the installation of special warning signals at traffic lights. In Bukhara province a system is in place whereby facilities are assessed with a view to creating supplementary work places for the disabled. The Uzavtotrans public transport corporation has started installing special facilities for the disabled in its waiting rooms and on the platforms of its bus stations.

159. Issues relating to the social welfare of the disabled are given priority attention not only by the social welfare system but also by other government departments, which work together to ensure the improved social protection of this particularly vulnerable sector of the population.

160. Taking as its nucleus the clinic of the Uzbek Research Institute for the Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled, a national centre has been set up for the rehabilitation of the disabled. Similarly, a new rehabilitation centre for those with disabilities resulting from disorders of the musculo-skeletal and motor function system is being set up at the clinic of the Ortopediya joint stock company. Ortopediya also runs a database on disabled persons in need of prosthetic appliances.

161. A matter for particular concern is the low average salary paid in the education and health sectors, which is partly responsible for the decline in the quality of teaching in educational establishments and treatment in State medical establishments. The disabled, including disabled children and those disabled from childhood, are entitled to medical and social assistance, to all forms of rehabilitation, the necessary medication, prosthetic and orthopaedic appliances, transport facilities on preferential terms, and also vocational training and retraining.

162. The disabled are entitled to free medical care in State-run health and social-welfare facilities, and to home nursing, while disabled persons living alone who need extra assistance and those with chronic psychiatric disorders are placed in residential social-welfare establishments. The procedure for providing medical and social assistance to the disabled and the list of benefits to which they are entitled are laid down by law.

163. In the second half of 1994 a process was launched to revamp the system of medical care for low-income families and families with children. A new uniform system was introduced for the provision of benefits to children up to the age of 16. The size of these benefits is scaled to the number of minor children in the family.

164. Pursuant to Cabinet of Ministers decision No. 319 of 24 June 1994, disabled children from birth to the age of 16 and category I and II disabled persons who have been disabled since childhood are granted benefits equivalent to 100 per cent of the minimum pension for their age. As on 1 July 1997 the benefit amounted to 1,400 som. On 1 January 1999 the benefits paid to category I and II persons disabled from childhood and to disabled children up to the age of 16 was increased to 2,520 som, and on 1 August 1999 further increased by an average of 40 per cent.

165. If a child disabled from childhood has lost one or both parents, the child is also granted, regardless of any other benefits provided, the pension granted for loss of a breadwinner, which is paid until the age of 16. Beyond that age, persons disabled from childhood receive either the benefit or the loss-of-breadwinner pension, as they choose. Total budgetary appropriations for the social welfare of disabled children in 1995 amounted to 1,402 million som and in 1996 4,375.8 million som with further allocations from the Social Insurance Fund of 1,509.2 million som and from local budgets of 2,720,751,900 som.

166. A measure of particular importance in strengthening the social protection of the disabled, in particular disabled children, was the adoption in 1995 of the State programme for rehabilitation of the disabled for the period 1996-2000. More than 40 ministries, government departments, foundations and other voluntary organizations are involved in implementing this programme. The programme covers the prevention of disability, the medical and social rehabilitation of the disabled, training of the disabled in various special fields and physical training, as well as the training of professionals to work with the disabled, the manufacture of prosthetic appliances and other aspects of rehabilitation of the disabled.

167. To implement the programme on a nationwide basis, 13 disabled rehabilitation centres were set up in different parts of the country. An official decision was adopted by the hokims of Khorezm and Fergana provinces to establish rehabilitation centres. A similar decision was also adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. Preparatory work is

under way in Nawoiy province and in Tashkent; thus, a rehabilitation centre for children suffering from cerebral palsy has been established in the town of Nawoiy. Preparations have been made for the opening of medical and social rehabilitation centres for children with impairments of the musculo-skeletal systems and motor function disorders in Fergana province and in Tashkent. In the towns of Marghilon and Kuva work has started on fitting special warning signals to traffic lights. In Bukhara province a programme is being run to assess facilities with a view to creating additional workplaces for the disabled.

168. The Ministry of Education is working on the issue of providing Braille textbooks and sign-language materials for children with sight and hearing defects. A typhlographic system has also been developed for children in primary classes and a special teaching programme for blind children in senior classes.

169. There are five institutional homes in Uzbekistan for children with mental and physical disabilities and special children's sections have also been established in homes for disabled women. There is a total of 1,800 places in these establishments. They are situated in Tashkent and in different parts of the country and constructed according to a standard design with an effective area of 8 sq. m per resident. The primary purpose of the homes is to maintain disabled children at the cost of the State. The disabled children who live in these establishments receive meals four times a day and are provided with clothing and the best possible living conditions. They are also given constant medical supervision and receive regular treatment. They receive both general school education and vocational training in special programmes. Sports activities are conducted for the disabled children, for the purpose of medical therapy and to meet their special rehabilitation needs. Thus, residents of the Tashkent 1 home often take part in the international spartakiad and some have even won prizes. A system of remedial gymnastics has been developed to a very high level at this home, conducted in a specially equipped hall under the supervision of qualified specialists.

170. The social welfare system in Uzbekistan includes three vocational technical colleges, providing training for a total of 1,165 totally or partially incapacitated young men and women. These are the national, Tashkent municipal and Fergana regional vocational technical colleges. With due regard for the physical disabilities of the students, training is arranged in these establishments in such fields as bookkeeping, radio and television maintenance, shoe repair, and the repair of refrigerators, air conditioners and measuring equipment.

171. Steps are being taken by the social welfare authorities to provide disabled children with prosthetic devices, hearing appliances, wheelchairs and other appliances and equipment. Prosthetic appliances are being manufactured in 17 orthopaedic and prosthetic companies, situated in Tashkent and in other provincial centres of Uzbekistan.

172. In order to meet the mobility needs of the disabled, the Uzbek Ministry of Social Welfare has struck deals with such foreign firms as Maier (Germany), Rehab (Hungary), and the joint venture Altromark for the production and supply of wheelchairs. In 1995 and 1996 more than 4,000 disabled persons were given wheelchairs and, in some cases, wheelchair cycles.

173. Uzbekistan has now started to manufacture its own crutches and walking sticks and these have been provided to some 10,000 disabled persons. The Uzbek-Arab joint venture Hilol is providing hearing appliances to those with impaired hearing.

174. Total budgetary appropriations for the social welfare of disabled children in 1995 amounted to 1,402 million som and in 1996 to 4,375.8 million som, including benefits paid from the Social Insurance Fund to disabled from birth children to an amount of 1,509.2 million som from local budgets to a total of 2,720,751,900 som. A total of 1,648,114,000 som was allocated for the maintenance of children's homes in 1999 and 62,480,800 som for the vocational technical colleges.

175. The issue of the social protection of the disabled, including children with impaired health, is a priority concern not only of the social welfare system but also of other government departments, all of which are pooling their efforts to strengthen the social protection afforded to this most vulnerable sector of the population.

Basic health and welfare: Disabled children (art. 23)

176. The blueprint for the new Principles of Education Act endeavours to codify in law the measures necessary to ensure proper conditions for the raising, education, and social and psychological rehabilitation of mentally or physically disabled children. The act will make provision, first, for the creation of a network of special educational establishments (and, in some cases, classes and groups) where work will be carried out to correct the condition of children, making use of the latest scientific achievements; second, for the elaboration of a comprehensive programme for the raising, education and treatment of children with special needs, with a view to their social rehabilitation and integration as active members of society. Funding for these measures will be provided by State and public organizations at especially increased rates. The main coordinating function in this exercise is being played by the Soglom Avlod Uchun foundation.

177. There are 13 homes for disabled children in Uzbekistan, all fully funded by the State. A national centre has been set up, run by highly qualified doctors deeply committed to their work. The Tayanch agency has been in operation for many years, providing treatment for abandoned disabled children in the best foreign clinics.

178. Among the customs followed by the peoples of Uzbekistan are procepts which categorically prohibit the chastisement of children under the age of five, whether by scolding looks, by raising the voice or by the use of corporal punishment. At the same time, Uzbek tradition also requires that from the earliest age, children be addressed with the respectful form of the pronoun "you", thereby reaffirming their dignity and their entitlement to the same measure of respect as adults; that they should be introduced to the beauty of nature and to music; and, most important, that they should have the opportunity to develop their imagination in play - as the popular saying has it, "games are the law of childhood".

179. In the traditional view of life disabled children have always been accorded particular attention. Since ancient times, they have been considered God's anointed. Among the Uzbek people, to neglect a disabled child is the gravest of sins.

180. The mahallya - is the public national institution for mutual assistance and social support - the main system for monitoring adherence to traditions which ensure a decent way of life for children and, primarily, for disabled children. The unique feature of this institution is that it has no formal status: it is integrated to the maximum degree in the ordinary life of the people and able to react swiftly and effectively to any manifestation of discrimination against children. In addition, the mahallya is responsible for forming public opinion which, as a mechanism for social reaction, is no less effective - and sometimes much more powerful and rigorous - than the various State agencies in preventing unlawful actions. People who violate tradition are excluded from their social unit; accordingly, in these conditions the strength of tradition is as great as that of the arm of the law.

Health and health services (art. 24)

181. Immediately after attaining independence, the Republic of Uzbekistan proclaimed the health of the younger generation as its first development priority. This in turn has determined the priorities set in overhauling the health-care system, restructuring the entire system of mother-and-child health care, promoting new approaches to family planning and implementing vigorous social policies to support and develop the country's paediatric services.

182. All medical services for the younger generation are free of charge and paid for by the State.

183. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan rules out any discrimination against children on the basis of national, religious or any other characteristics. All children have equal rights to medical treatment, to attend holiday camps, etc.

184. Work has started in recent years on the creation of specialized centres, departments and laboratories equipped to provide specialized medical assistance in the fields of haematology, regional pathology, child surgery, gastroenterology and cardiology. Children receive primary medical care in children's polyclinics. Specialized inpatient care is provided in national and provincial children's hospitals, with a total capacity of 22,446 beds. Particular attention is given to infectious-disease hospitals in Uzbekistan, since the control of infectious pathology is one of the main focuses of the country's health authorities.

185. Close attention is given not only to the physical health of the younger generation, but also to its healthy mental development. A number of children's newspapers and journals are published in Uzbekistan. One of the country's most popular newspapers, *Solnyshko* - "Little Sun" - has run an art competition in which children expressed their views on human rights issues. One of the most interesting results of this competition was the proposal, by children from the Katta-Qurghon school, that the "right to love" should be proclaimed. This is

an essential element of respect for the freedom of choice: the freedom to love, in the face of a tradition which dictates that parents choose their children's spouses. The competition prize winners were awarded certificates at a ceremony in March 1999, organized with UNDP cooperation and held in the National Human Rights Centre.

186. Work conducted over the last eight years has succeeded in lowering infant mortality by more than 30 per cent. This positive result is due to the radical transformation of Uzbek society, a greater openness towards international cooperation and vigorous efforts by non-governmental and international organizations.

187. A national blueprint has been drafted for tackling vital problems related to mother-and-child care. The blueprint takes due account of, first, the demographic situation; second, the particular social and economic aspects of the transition period; third, the state of children's health, particularly those living in environmentally disturbed areas; and fourth, the rehabilitation of disabled children and children with various forms of retardation in their physical or mental development.

188. A special programme has been implemented for the prevention of infant mortality in the perinatal period and for the prevention of congenital anomalies. To that end, perinatal and neonatal centres have been set up, together with intensive care units for children in the first month of life. In Uzbekistan there are currently some 2,059,000 hospital places for the treatment of infirm newborn infants and the care of premature babies.

189. Paediatric training is provided at one of Central Asia's largest specialized institutes - the Tashkent Paediatric Medical Institute - and also at the paediatric faculties of Andijon and Samarkhand State medical institutes, the Nukus branch of the Tashkent Paediatric Medical Institute and the Urgench branch of the First Tashkent State Medical Institute. Courses for the further training and upgrading of paediatricians are run every five years at the Tashkent Medical Further Training Institute and the medical further training faculties of Andijon and Samarkhand State medical institutes.

190. Primary medical care remains at a relatively low level, particularly outside the large urban centres, in terms of both the quantity of up-to-date medical technology available (in particular, diagnostic equipment) and the quality of medical services provided. As a result the medical care in rural areas tends to be more treatment-oriented while in the larger cities preventive medicine is gaining ascendance.

191. All needy children have access to medical services in Uzbekistan, without regard to their social origin, sex and nationality. No cases of polio infection were recorded in the country in 1998. According to estimates by World Health Organization (WHO) specialists, by 2000 Uzbekistan may be included among the States which have resolved their polio problem.

192. Uzbekistan is implementing a universal child immunization programme and even though a large proportion of the vaccines have to be acquired abroad immunization of this most vulnerable sector of the population is provided free of charge. Immunization shots are available

at fixed charges for people who require them for preventive reasons. Following its experience in 1998, when a shortage of vaccines meant that the immunization campaign during outbreaks of infectious diseases (primarily viral hepatitis) could not provide full coverage, the Government has now set in place special emergency measures.

193. After independence, the health authorities faced a number of extremely difficult tasks in the field of mother-and-child care: first, they had to tackle the problem of inadequate nutrition, particularly of orphans and abandoned children; second, a functioning family planning system had to be set in place (involving the introduction of a new area of medical training - the preparation of family doctors, the upgrading of the diagnostic equipment and other equipment for the treatment of mothers and children, the conduct of contraception programmes, etc.); third, urgent measures had to be taken to improve the health of mothers and children in environmentally neglected areas, primarily, the Aral crisis zone; and, fourth, the country's paediatric services had to be provided with essential pharmacological supplies.

194. The problems of the current transitional period and the environmental degradation of a number of areas of the country mean that 5 per cent of Uzbek children are born underweight.

195. The most widespread children's diseases are related to the pathological features of given areas and have environmental causes.

196. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan enshrines the right of citizens to a healthy environment and to health care, and states the need for the system of legislative regulation of social relations in the interface between society and nature to be fleshed out with new environmental content.

197. Given the state of the natural environment in Uzbekistan, a clear and effective regulatory regime is required, which must also be strictly differentiated in accordance with the nature and origins of each area of environmental stress. In conducting the urgent environmental work needed in our region, two main categories must be distinguished:

(a) Aral Sea and the Aral area - environmental disaster area: This area is characterized by the profound degradation of the natural environment (chemical pollution of the water, soil and atmosphere), sharp deterioration of the ecological niche (complex pathologies, growth in child and maternal mortality rates, increasing anthropological degradation of the population, sharp decline in their immune status and high infant mortality rates);

(b) Areas where major industrial parks are situated - the Nawoiy, Angren-Olmaliq, Chirchiq, Fergana-Marghilon and, Saryas districts, which are areas of high environmental stress (potential environmental disaster areas). These areas are characterized by a high concentration of industrial and mining production (cumulative pollution of the atmosphere, soil and water, massive outflows of wastes and spoil, growing degradation of the natural environment), a gradual deterioration of the ecological niche (increased morbidity, growth of occupational pathology and decline in the immune status.

198. OFP and the ECOSAN foundation are planning to build an international children's health and education centre in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, to be called "Children of the Aral", at which some 5,000 - 6,000 children will be able to receive essential treatments for periods of one year without disrupting their schooling.

199. On Uzbekistan's attainment of independence, the responsibility borne by the Ministry of Health for the health of the country's population was increased manifold. One of the main focuses of its work became the fight against the so-called "plague of the twentieth century" - HIV infection - and its prevention and treatment, among both adults and children. The Cabinet of Ministers has adopted a resolution on establishing a national coordinating council to prevent and combat HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases in Uzbekistan. The council has a permanent staff. National tests for HIV infection have been developed and used successfully.

200. At the same time, the growth in sexually transmitted diseases is causing alarm. In 1987 and 1998, 51 cases of HIV infection were reported in Uzbekistan; 27 of those infected were foreigners and 24 permanent residents of Uzbekistan. Eight have since died of AIDS and two have left to reside permanently in the Russian Federation. Currently, 14 HIV positive patients are under medical observation.

201. AIDS centres exist in every region, but they have no beds. Those who are found to be ill are moved to Tashkent, which has an HIV centre with beds, nursing staff, equipment and its own instruments and implements. It has also planned to set up a surgical unit for HIV-positive patients. No cases have been identified of HIV-infected children.

202. Syphilis rates increased from 10.8 per 100,000 in 1994 to 38.5 per 100,000 in 1996. Gonorrhoea rates in Uzbekistan also increased from 21.7 per 100,000 in 1994 to 25.0 per 100,000 in 1995. The increase in the number of cases points to a possible growth in HIV, in response to which the Prevention of HIV Infection Act has been adopted.

203. AIDS orphans undergo a careful and repeated testing procedure and are then placed in the care of the social welfare authorities.

204. The Ministry of Health strictly monitors all traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children. The traditional custom of circumcision is carried out in clinics by experienced surgeons and, to judge by the statistics, no complications arise; on the contrary, the operation helps prevent phimoses.

205. All women of childbearing age undergo obligatory screening.

206. Following family planning measures conducted by the Ministry of Health, the birth rate, which in 1991 measured 34.5 per thousand, dropped to 26.0 in 1997; maternal mortality rates fell from 65.3 per 100,000 live births in 1991 to 28.5 in 1997; infant mortality from 35.5 per 1,000 live births in 1991 to 17.2 in 1996. Ministry of Health statistics indicate that infant mortality in 1998 measured 21.7 per 1,000 live births and maternal mortality 28.6 per 100,000 live births.

207. There is an increase in the number of births by women aged between 20 and 30, this being the optimal childbearing age-group. There is also a notable absence of early marriages, which are proscribed under the traditional mahallya system of community support for the rights of the individual. There is still room for improvement, however, in the medical equipment and services in obstetric establishments.

208. International cooperation in the area of child health care is primarily directed towards tackling the problem of family planning and rendering assistance to children in environmental disaster areas. A great volume of focused work is being carried out under the supervision of WHO and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in all sectors of the health-care system and to promote mother-and-child health.

Mother and child health

209. One of the main focuses in the area of mother-and-child health is the creation of normal working conditions for women in the production sector. Women and girls working under unfavourable conditions receive a range of benefits and compensation. The existing system of benefits and compensation for work in difficult and unhealthy working conditions includes the following provisions:

Additional leave of 3-24 days, depending upon the level of difficulty and hazardousness of the work being conducted;

Shorter working day, of between four and six hours;

Reduction of the working week from 36 to 24 hours;

Free dietary meals, to be determined in accordance with the level of hazardousness of the work conducted;

Free milk products, provided without the deduction of pay.

210. Articles 35 and 36 of the Family Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan stipulate that mothers, during pregnancy and for one-and-a-half years after the birth of their child, are entitled to maintenance from their husbands. This right obtains after the dissolution of marriage as well. In addition, a monthly child benefit is paid by the State until the child is two.

Social security and childcare services and facilities (arts. 26 and 18)

211. One of the main tasks of the State is to ensure the welfare of the younger generation, including by promoting the mental and physical development of young people, providing vocational training and preparing them for an active life in society. To this end, the Constitution enjoins all citizens of Uzbekistan to take responsibility for the raising of children, in conjunction with the assistance and support provided by the State. This is also demonstrated by the Republic of Uzbekistan State Youth Policy (Principles) Act of 20 November 1991.

212. In addition, a number of presidential decrees have been enacted and decisions adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers to set up funds to provide support and social protection for young people, to uphold the rights of orphans, children without parental care and disabled children and the "Soglom Avlod Uchun" Order has been instituted, as the highest honour awarded for services to youth.

213. The policy pursued by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in supporting such foundations as Kamolot, Umid, Soglom Avlod Uchun and the Children's Foundation in itself significantly promotes new opportunities for the development and social protection of children and young people.

214. The State system in Uzbekistan for the social support of families with children, the country's legislative framework in that area and the measures adopted by the Government to improve the situation with regard to the protection of children's rights all demonstrate that Uzbekistan is strictly adhering to international principles and commitments to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

215. At the same time, special measures are being taken for the protection of children through various channels and in a number of different areas, pursuant to Uzbek legislation and international legal instruments.

216. In Uzbekistan, the social protection of children is based on the existing uniform system for the provision of State social assistance to families with children and it encompasses the following benefits:

Monthly childcare benefit paid until the age of two;

Pregnancy and maternity benefit and a lump-sum benefit paid on the birth of the child.

Child benefits are financed from the State budget and from the funds of enterprises, institutions and organizations, irrespective of their forms of ownership.

217. The first type of benefit, which is paid to persons actually providing childcare until the child reaches the age of two, is set at a level of 150 per cent of the established minimum wage, regardless of the number of children. For working mothers this benefit is paid from the funds of enterprises, institutions and organizations and, for non-working mothers, from the Social Insurance Fund. The second benefit - the pregnancy and childbirth benefit - is paid to women on pregnancy and maternity leave and is set at 100 per cent of their wage, while the lump-sum benefit paid on the birth of the child is equivalent to twice the minimum monthly wage. The benefits are paid from the Social Insurance Fund.

218. Until 1997, a system was in operation in Uzbekistan under which benefits were paid to all families with children under 16, irrespective of the family's property status. Some 10 million children were covered by this form of social assistance and the yearly outlay on these benefits accounted on average for some 5 per cent of the State budget. The child benefits were funded

from three sources: the State budget, the local budgets and the Social Insurance Fund. Benefits were allocated and paid at the workplace of one of the child's parents. The level of the benefit depended on the number of children in the family and was pegged to the minimum wage.

219. In January 1997 a new system was introduced for the payment of child benefit, under which families in need of State support were identified by local authorities. With this arrangement State support can be more effectively targeted; in other words, it has moved from a form of blanket assistance to a strictly means-assessed allocation of support, based on such measurable criteria, as economic need, the number of children in the family and specific conditions in that area of the country.

220. The benefit is awarded and paid by the local authority, the mahallya. The level of the benefit depends on the number of children in the family and is set as a percentage of the minimum wage: thus families with one child receive 50 per cent of the minimal wage; families with two children, 100 per cent; families with three children, 140 per cent; and families with four and more children, 175 per cent.

221. The benefit is primarily funded from the State budget. Extrabudgetary sources may also be drawn on (such as the funds of enterprises, or deductions from charitable foundations and business organizations). Over the first quarter of 1997, an effective total of 1,072.4 million som was paid out in child benefit to 1,119,413 families, or 29 per cent of the total number of families with children aged below 16.

Education, leisure and cultural activities (art. 28)

222. The Constitution and law of Uzbekistan fully embrace all aspects of education. The Government is taking effective steps to overhaul the entire education system. On 29 August 1997, Parliament adopted a new Education Act and the National Professional Training Programme Act.

223. On 10 March 1997, the Cabinet of Ministers had adopted its decision on the elaboration of a national professional training programme. A commission and working groups were set up to draft the document, and the key issues to be addressed in the new act were identified.

224. On 6 October 1997, a presidential decree was enacted on the fundamental restructuring of the education and vocational training system and on ensuring the best possible system for the raising of children. A national commission was set up for the implementation of the national professional training programme, headed by the Prime Minister, and assigned its primary tasks.

225. Under Uzbek law, general secondary education - extending over a period of nine years, comprising grades 1-9 at school - ensures that children receive a thorough education in the principles of science, that their cognitive faculties are developed, that they acquire basic scholarship, scientific learning, and general cultural knowledge, that their spiritual and moral qualities are nourished on the basis of national and universal spiritual values, and that they develop vocational skills, a capacity for creative thought and an informed attitude to the surrounding world and to their choice of profession.

226. As of 1 January 1999, there were 7,546 kindergartens operating in Uzbekistan, providing education for 681,200 children. Group sizes ranged from 15 to 20 children. Following the reform of the pre-school system, the following types of pre-school establishments are now in existence: kindergartens, recreational groups after school, and kindergartens with a special focus (health-building, sports-oriented, artistic, musical and creative and others). There are more than 800 foreign language groups in the pre-school establishments, in which children learn English, French, Chinese, Arabic and other languages.

227. There are 619 out-of-school educational establishments in Uzbekistan. These groups, with an average size of 62.2 pupils, provide out-of-school education in specific subjects to 361,801 children.

228. To enhance the effectiveness of the teaching provided in children's pre-school establishments, to foster a sense of competitiveness in the pre-school system and to improve the conditions for the rearing and all-round development of children of pre-school age in accordance with the national professional training programme, on 24 June 1999 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a decision on measures to establish and develop a network of non-State pre-school establishments. With a view to raising the quality of education, the national professional training programme provides for the development of a network of schools and general educational establishments of a new type - science-oriented and arts-oriented secondary schools. Thus, on a 1999 initiative of the President, science-oriented and arts-oriented schools have been established in each provincial centre, and kitted out with the latest equipment. Competitive exams are held to select the best qualified teachers to be assigned to teach in these schools.

229. While in 1992 there were only 31 such schools, there were in 1997 190, and the number of pupils has risen accordingly - from 9,800 to 92,400. In all, there are 334 science-oriented schools and 190 arts-oriented schools. One of the tasks set in the 1996-2000 programme for the development of the country's rural infrastructure is to set in place a sound material and technical basis for rural schools. Special State programmes are being run in such areas as ethics and knowledge, economic education, rural schooling, rehabilitation of children with special needs and others.

230. A special State policy is being implemented in Uzbekistan to support gifted children and young scholars. Special centres and foundations are being established under local authorities to identify talent among young boys and girls and to promote the development of their abilities. On 10 June 1999 a presidential decree was enacted in support of the proposal to institute the Zulfiya State Prize, to foster respect for women and to ensure that they are held in high regard, as well as to encourage gifted girls in the development of literature, art, science and culture.

231. As part of the national programme, work is under way in Uzbekistan on reorganizing the system of vocational education, with due regard for the specific way that has developed in different parts of the country, the labour market primarily in rural areas. There are currently 442 training establishments operating in the system, including 209 vocational schools, 180 vocational colleges of science and technology and 53 business schools with a total student population of 220,000, 43 per cent of whom are girls.

232. At the current time (1 January 1999) there are 9,627 general education schools in Uzbekistan, 221 of which are primary schools, 1,846 schools covering the full nine-year cycle, 6,996 secondary schools, and 85 special schools and boarding schools for children with special physical and mental needs.

233. In compliance with the presidential decree of 7 April 1999 on the creation of the Tashkent Islamic University, on 6 May 1999 the Cabinet of Ministers passed a decision on the organization of the University's activities, designed to promote the extensive study of the rich and outstanding spiritual and cultural heritage of the Islamic religion, so that it may be carefully preserved and handed down to future generations, to raise the level of public awareness in this field and to promote the training of highly qualified specialists to the highest modern standards.

234. Since independence the number of higher educational establishments in Uzbekistan has increased, from 54 in 1992 to 60 in 1999. Over the same period the number of students at these institutions has declined from 316,200 to 158,200. In the 1990s, about 39 per cent of the student body was female. The highest proportion of female students was recorded in 1994, with 40.2 per cent. There has been a gradual decline in the numbers of female students over subsequent years and in 1997 they constituted 38 per cent of the total student body in higher education. This is primarily attributable to the average age of students in higher education - 18-23. In Uzbekistan this is the age at which women get married and start having children. Because of the subordinate position occupied by girls in their own families and, subsequently, those of their husbands, decisions about their continuing education are taken by parents and close relatives and even girls of majority age and young women consider it quite natural to accept the choice of their elders. A study conducted in 1998 as part of the family planning project confirms that choices bearing on women's education are generally made by parents or the husband and are usually limited to the teaching and medical professions. Many of the girls surveyed believe that they would have to abandon their education once they married.

235. For these reasons, the coverage of girls and women by the education system, which is high at the level of compulsory secondary education, falls off at the subsequent levels. One of the main goals of the State education policy is to change the established stereotypes regarding education and to help women adapt to changes in the economic and social domain. In particular, introduction of a compulsory 12-year education system will, besides other goals, serve the purpose of discouraging early marriages and help motivate women to continue their education.

236. Compulsory secondary specialized and vocational education, extending for a period of three years after completion of general education, is a separate component in the Uzbek continuous education system. Pupils are free to choose their own path for specialized and vocational secondary education - whether at an academic science or arts-oriented school or at a vocational college. They may follow either State or non-State curricula. To ensure the best possible conditions for improving the system and accelerating Uzbekistan's integration in the world communication system, it is planned to move gradually to adoption of the Latin alphabet by 2005. Young people at work have the opportunity to study without disrupting their employment.

237. Under the State's education policy, education is free and universal and various forms of material support are provided to pupils (such as grants, assistance from the Social Welfare Fund, the partial or full reimbursement of boarding school fees by the State, and assistance from various sponsors). Student grants are set at double the minimum wage.

238. Education in Uzbekistan is currently provided in general education schools in seven languages: Uzbek, Russian, Karakalpak, Kazakh, Turkmen, Tajik and Kyrgyz. Children belonging to a national minority may study their native language in areas where members of that nationality are concentrated.

239. Under the obligatory basic education requirement, children must attend school regularly (if they are educated outside the home). Parents and teachers are obliged to monitor school attendance and to take measures to improve school performance. Educational establishments, parents and teachers are responsible to the public for upholding the constitutional rights of children to education. All textbooks and teaching aids are provided free of charge by the State to pupils in primary classes. In addition, a significant proportion of first-graders (roughly 40 per cent) are provided with sets of warm clothing paid for from the State budget.

Aims of education (art. 29)

240. In accordance with the Education Act and the national professional training programme, the State education policy has set itself a number of aims, including the following:

According to priority of education in the social development of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

Humanitarian and democratic nature of education;

Uninterrupted and continuous nature of education;

Scientific quality and secular nature of the State education system;

Proeminence of universal human values;

Universality of education and the upholding of State standards;

Obligatory nature of general secondary education and also of specialized secondary education and vocational training;

Voluntary nature of the choice of specialized secondary education or vocational training: i.e., between academic science or arts-oriented schools and vocational colleges;

Promotion of scholarship and talent; and

Respect for the individuality of pupils and students.

241. Thanks to the very active educational programme under way in Uzbekistan, significant progress has been achieved in this area. Thus, since 1997 some 700 Uzbek students have been studying at distinguished foreign colleges, as assigned and supported by the Umid ("Hope") Foundation for Gifted Youth, created on the initiative of the President, Mr. Islam Karimof.

242. In 1999 alone, after a five-stage selection process, 184 Uzbek students received State grants to study in France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. All in all, more than 3,000 Uzbek students are following various courses abroad. The Ustoz Foundation has been set up, by presidential decree, to raise the teaching level and to boost the skills of the teaching staff at the country's institutions of higher education. The Foundation's principle objective is to provide assistance for the further training of lecturers abroad.

243. Uzbek law guarantees the equal rights of all, without distinction as to sex, language, age, racial, national and ethnic origin, creed and attitude to religion. The law prescribes an education system under which teaching is tailored to the needs of the individual, ensuring the harmonious development of the child and taking due account of his or her specific qualities, abilities and interests. The State upholds the equal rights of all children to receive an education in all spheres. Representatives of all faiths have the right to education, including religious education.

244. The State education policy is predicated on the principle that teaching must be conducted in a spirit of respect for human rights and the freedom of the individual. The fostering of respect for other peoples and nations is also reflected in the laws of Uzbekistan. Almost all the country's statutes contain special provisions requiring strict observance of the equality of all citizens.

245. Uzbek law enshrines the principle that protection of the environment is a part of environmental education and that children should develop a sense of responsibility towards the environment. The aim is to develop by every possible means a spirit of respect in children for nature and the environment. Under the long-term programme of measures to restore the health of children from environmentally disturbed areas of Uzbekistan, some 13,000 children regularly spend their summer holidays in children's health centres in the country's holiday resorts.

Leisure, recreation and cultural activities (art. 31)

246. The fostering of spiritual values, the promotion of education, culture and art and the aesthetic and moral development of the population form an integral part of the building of a new independent State. Since its attainment of independence, Uzbekistan has set itself the task of providing extensive and real opportunities to its people for the application of their creative energies, abilities and gifts and for the all-round development of the individual. The State has determined strategic areas and specific tasks for its cultural promotion work: a number of government instruments have been adopted, designed to foster spiritual values, to promote art, culture and enlightenment, and to reform the country's cultural sphere, enhancing its social and educational role.

247. In the framework of these reform efforts, alongside the State cultural and artistic establishments, increased prominence has been given to various public bodies - foundations, centres, associations and organizations - which are responsible for catering as widely as possible

for the creative interests of the people of Uzbekistan, and promoting their self-sufficiency, free creativity and exploration of new forms and initiatives in all spheres of art and culture. Thus, pursuant to the presidential decree on the development of theatre arts, the Uzbekteatr performing arts association has been set up, embracing 36 of the country's theatres, and the Artmadat foundation has been established to support the theatre in Uzbekistan. The Umid youth foundation plans to send opera singers to Italy for practical training.

248. Art and culture are playing an increasingly important role in Uzbek life. There are 2,500 clubs, centres and palaces of culture in Uzbekistan. Some 215,000 people are engaged in artistic and cultural activities in a variety of groups and ensembles, studios and people's theatres. There are 6,200 public libraries in Uzbekistan and 68 museums and theatre attendance figures for 1998 were 3,058,300. In addition, Uzbekistan has an extensive network of after-school establishments, among which children's music, art and theatre centres are particularly popular. There are 310 such centres, providing artistic and cultural education to 79,300 children and young people. Close attention is given to the development of children's creative talents. A children's art competition was held in Tashkent on the theme: "The Silk Road and its bonds of friendship: images by the children of Uzbekistan and Japan", and the third international art competition on the theme: "Enchanting world of colour" was held in Tashkent province, with the participation of 50 children from Central Asian countries. A secondary boarding school specializing in fine and applied art for talented children has been opened in the town of Nurat, in Nawoiy province. Some 5,000 boys and girls are attending courses in the teaching establishments of the Academy of Arts.

249. A variety of national and international festivals, competitions and exhibitions on a broad range of themes, demonstrating the splendid achievements of the talented young people of Uzbekistan, help popularize the pictorial and applied arts, instrumental and vocal music and the performing arts. New literary, artistic and general-interest journals and magazines have been founded, and appear in Uzbek, Russian and English, including *Guliston*, *Moziydan Sado* and *Teatr*. Uzbekistan's rich cultural heritage is becoming ever more visible as the colourful talents of its contemporary performing arts are displayed to acclaim at international musical festivals. Alongside the traditional "Sharq Taronalari" festivities, a number of other festivals were held in Uzbekistan in 1998, including the "Ilhom-XX" third international contemporary music festival, held in various theatres in Tashkent with the participation of 100 performers and soloists from 10 different countries. Other recent musical events include a festival of symphonic music, held in Tashkent, the thirtieth national accordion festival, organized by the Russian Cultural Centre of Uzbekistan, a national festival of orchestras of Uzbek folk instruments and a competition of military musical compositions. In May 1998, the final stage of the Uzbek song festival was held, with the participation of 1,000 young singers; in June 1998, the "Flower Children of 98" rock music festival was held and, in the town of Namangan, the final round of the "Uzbekistan Kushik Bairami" performing arts competition for students at secondary and higher education establishments. The choir of the Ulugh-Bek Tashkent State University took second place at a university choirs' festival held in Germany.

250. The "Navruz" national theatre festival, now a tradition in Uzbekistan, continues to gain in popularity; in 1998 the "Humo" international youth theatre festival was held, with the participation of theatre groups from many Uzbek towns as well as theatres from Israel. The festival is now to be held on an annual basis and to extend its geographical range. In 1998, the

Uzbek ballet company took part in a ballet competition in Paris. Soloists from the "Bahor", "Tanovar" and "Lazgi" groups and from the "Uzbekraqs" national company took part in the fifteenth international folklore festival in the town of Saint Gallen in Belgium. Another event on the cultural calendar is the M. Turgunbaeva national folkdance festival.

251. Uzbekistan has an immensely rich and truly unique cultural heritage. Situated on its territory are a great many monuments from its thousand years of history and culture, which are of immense value in promoting the Uzbek people's growing respect for their history and love of their culture. Extensive programmes are being mounted by the State to tackle the problem of preserving and popularizing the country's antiquities. Special architectural and ethnographic areas and open-air museums have been set up in many parts of the country and major work undertaken to restore, conserve and develop major historical and architectural sites, including three large preservation areas, situated in the world-famous ancient cities of Central Asia, and new centres have been created to celebrate the achievements of our great ancestors Al-Bukhari and Al-Farghoni. Museums are playing an increasingly important role in public life. A museum of the history of the Timurids was opened in 1996. The outstanding collection of the Karakalpakstan National State Art Gallery is gaining popularity with the public and it recently held a successful exhibition in the French city of Cannes.

252. The national centres have an important role in the country's cultural renaissance. There are more than 100 such centres in Uzbekistan, helping to draw together people of different ethnic origin. They run a variety of activities including entertainment evenings, exhibitions and festivals, which help people from different diasporas to maintain their links with their historical homelands. Members of different nationalities also participate in symposiums, festivals and conferences organized in other countries. Representatives of the national cultural centres are included in government delegations on official foreign visits. The activities of all the centres are coordinated by the National Inter-Ethnic Cultural Centre.

253. The Uzbek Ministry of Culture runs 309 music and art schools and three special boarding schools, with a total student population of 70,467 and teacher complement of 7,782.

254. After independence, the President issued a number of decrees designed to develop and support education in the arts, including decrees on measures to encourage young scholars (February 1993), measures to improve musical education (December 1996), the organization of a college of folkdance and choreography (January 1997) and the establishment of the Academy of Arts (January 1997). These decrees have as their purpose the development of the arts, the introduction of the new forms of special secondary and vocational education prescribed by the new Education Act, and the promotion of the equal rights and equal opportunities of gifted children to receive an appropriate education.

255. The Ministry of Culture has run various competitions to identify and encourage talented children. These include the M. Ashrafi and M. Kara-Yakubov children's music competitions under the slogan "Soglom Avlod Uchun" and art competitions for students at art schools in different age categories. Prize winners from many of these competitions also take part in international exhibitions and competitions and have received international acclaim.

256. Notwithstanding the country's economic difficulties, every possible effort is being made to maintain and develop the country's music and art schools. Over the last two years, there have been no more closures of children's music schools (in all, since 1992, 21 such schools have been closed). As many as 15 per cent of the children at these schools, from low-income families and children's homes and the children of disabled parents, benefit from the system of free instruction, which is being maintained.

257. In August 1996, an English-language immersion programme was held for 400 children from all the provinces of Uzbekistan at the Avtomobilist children's summer camp. The programme was organized by the Association of the Federation of Uzbek Trade Unions, in conjunction with the United States Peace Corps in Uzbekistan, the Cabinet of Ministers, the Ministry of Education and the provincial hokimiyats, at a total cost of 2,164,000 som.

258. The State is taking steps to ensure proper observance of the principle of equality and the prevention of discrimination against children on the grounds of ethnic background, social group, place of residence and sex.

259. The State subsidizes all the art schools and boarding schools in Uzbekistan and funds a wide range of measures to foster the creativity of children, to instil in them a sense of respect for the cultural and spiritual heritage of their country and for world civilizations, and to preserve the originality of different cultures.

260. Assistance is also provided for teachers' and students' exchange programmes, as well as for cultural exchanges and other international contacts.

261. The "Gamkhurlik" ("Care") programme is a yearly event held throughout the country to provide organized leisure and recreation during the summer holidays for children with behavioural problems who have been registered with the internal affairs authorities as needing special attention. The programme is held in children's summer camps and school camps and jointly run by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Internal Affairs and voluntary organizations.

262. It should be noted that children from low-income families spend their holidays in summer camps free of charge, the costs being borne by the State.

Recreation and cultural activities

263. Uzbekistan has no special legislation governing the rights of children to leisure and cultural activities. These rights are established, however, in various statutory instruments relating to issues of education, youth policy, and support for the arts and culture.

264. No restrictions are placed in Uzbekistan on the free participation of children in cultural life and artistic activities, either on the grounds of age or on other grounds, such as sex, ethnic origin or social status. There are problems in some areas relating to children's access to cultural activities, because of the distance between their homes and major cultural centres, due primarily

to the increasing cost of public transport and the trend to abolish free services and also because of the fare system on municipal transport and in the underground, under which separate tickets at the adult rate have to be purchased for each form of transport.

265. There is an established system in Uzbekistan whereby professional, cultural and artistic establishments (museums, theatres, libraries, cultural associations, recreation and culture parks, the circus, educational establishments, etc.) all contribute to the cultural education of children and help with the organization of cultural and leisure activities.

266. At the national level, subsidies are provided for a range of cultural, artistic and leisure activities for children on the occasion of national and traditional holidays, such as Navruz, Independence Day, New Year, National Children's Day and others.

267. In order to foster in children a sense of respect for national traditions and for the cultural heritage both of Uzbekistan and of the world as a whole, and to help them develop a free creative individuality and sense of human dignity, the State is taking a range of steps of a legislative nature, designed to develop and support theatre, music, dance, fine arts, museum work and other activities in Uzbekistan.

268. Measures are being taken to ensure the conservation and proper maintenance of all the country's music schools, art schools, children's libraries and children's theatres; new artistic bodies are also being established. Thus, since 1994, two more children's theatres have been created, one in Tashkent and one in Qarshi, while the National Children's Art Centre has set up three new branches in the provinces. The centre is currently providing teaching to 300 children (primarily orphans, disabled children and children from low-income families). As many as one fifth of the circus and children's theatre performances in the country are put on, free of charge, for charity. Parents are fully or partially reimbursed from local budgets for the cost of tickets and transport to enable children from villages and the countryside to attend various cultural events (children from rural areas constitute between 7 and 10 per cent of the annual total number of children attending such events).

269. As many institutions in Uzbekistan are now shifting to new forms of management and to funding from local budgets and as prices in the services sector and the costs of material and technical maintenance continue to rise, it is becoming increasingly hard for cultural societies, public parks and fairgrounds, libraries, provincial theatres, museums and other establishments to continue to operate at the proper professional level. As the entertainment sector becomes increasingly commercialized, there is a natural process of shrinkage, resulting in the closure every year of four or five fairground establishments as non-viable; at the same time, children's performing groups, art studios and theatre studios are shifting to a fee-paying basis.

270. For that reason, not all sectors of the population have access to increasingly expensive recreation and coaching facilities for children. At the same time, the number of children attending such establishments is on the increase and has grown, on average, by some 50 per cent. There is also a yearly increase (3 to 5 per cent) in the number of children attending courses at professional theatres, the circus and museums.

271. Economic difficulties are also affecting the country's libraries: every year, some 10,000 more children use library services, while the library stock is decreasing annually by between 10 and 15 per cent and there is a shortage of books in the Uzbek language: currently these account for only one third of the existing stock.

272. A system of sponsorship for cultural activities of various kinds is starting to gain hold in Uzbekistan. This takes the form of assistance for the conduct of exhibitions, competitions and tours by children's performing groups. At the same time special grants have to be provided by the State for the support and development of children's art and culture establishments.

273. In all, there are 75 general museums, 514 public museums on specific themes, 496 independent children's libraries, 86 culture and recreation parks, two zoos and one permanent circus in Uzbekistan.

274. Particular attention in this context should be given to the work of the charitable youth foundation Kamolot, which has 12,591,006 members, 8,358,050 of whom are girls. Over recent years, Kamolot has carried out the following activities:

Together with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, it conducted a course on youth issues in Samarkand on 7 and 8 April 1997;

Together with the UNESCO office in Uzbekistan, it conducted courses on the issue of youth and the spiritual development of Uzbekistan;

It has conducted courses for young entrepreneurs in Tashkent and in Tashkent province.

275. In addition, the Uzbek Women's Committee, working together with the Mahallya Foundation, has conducted round tables on the role of the mahallya in training and education, to discuss such issues as juvenile delinquency and the fostering in children of a spirit of diligence and patriotism.

276. A number of measures have been conducted to promote sporting activities and a healthy lifestyle among the younger generation. In conjunction with the Umid start-up team to launch the scout movement in Uzbekistan, a national championship was held in rock-climbing and other training activities conducted for scouts, to mark the Navruz national holiday.

277. Official steps are currently being taken to organize a competition with the slogan "Men Uzbek tilida gaplashaman" ("I can speak Uzbek") in Russian-medium schools in Uzbekistan. The competition is designed to encourage the younger generation to respect the culture of other peoples, to reject discrimination on the grounds of race and nationality and to revere Uzbek traditions and customs, as well as to improve their skills in the State language.

278. In order to prepare adolescent girls for family life and to raise a healthy new generation, plans are also being made, in conjunction with the Uzbek Women's Committee, to run courses on the role of morality and the individual in upholding the State. In August 1998, the "Women of the Twenty-first Century" Centre was opened as part of the Kamolot Youth Foundation and the centre's director was accorded the status of deputy-president of the foundation.

279. Under the campaign slogan "Youth of Uzbekistan in the Twenty-first Century", a number of joint measures have been planned for 1999, in conjunction with the Trade Union Council, to provide summer recreation for children. A youth talent course was held at the Ministry of Education's, Iste'dod Centre as a result of which 41 talented youngsters are now receiving Kamolot grants. The Yosh Ijodkorlar club has been running a programme to identify talented poets from among its members and to provide material incentives for young poets. Plans are also afoot, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, to organize children's tours to the country's historical sites and to visit monuments to the country's independence, so as to foster in them a spirit of patriotism and national pride. A special youth competition has been organized to promote young people's knowledge of the State political system and the members of the panel of judges have been appointed. A special centre has been set up in Bukhara to promote young people's knowledge of the history and nature of this part of the world and to foster in them a spirit of respect for their country. A cooperation agreement has been signed with the Mahallya Foundation on activities to foster a spirit of humanism among children and to enhance the role of the family, the school and the mahallya in the development of the individual. Plans are under way to run a competition on local history, with a view to assessing children's knowledge of the history of their part of the world and ways of improving this knowledge.

280. In compliance with the resolutions adopted by UNESCO at its twenty-eighth session in 1995 and by the Uzbek Cabinet of Ministers to mark the two-thousandth anniversary of the towns of Bukhara and Khiva, a youth centre for the historical study of Bukhara and Khiva has been opened. The centre organizes a variety of expeditions, including scientific expeditions, to extend young people's knowledge of the history of that area. A number of television programmes, targeted at young people, have also been prepared, to inform them about the history of their country.

281. The mahallya committees are also contributing to character-building activities for the younger generation. A range of children's clubs have been opened in all mahallya centres, where children can spend their free time in a constructive manner. Educational activities for children are a fixed item on the agenda of the periodic meetings held by these centres.

282. State television broadcasts the following programmes, containing both entertainment and educational content, for children:

"Olam bizning quzimizda" ("The world through our eyes"), a 30-minute programme produced by the "Alanga" ("Flame") youth radio channel, featuring discussions on issues proposed by children themselves. The programme gives children a platform for their views and the chance to defend their opinions;

"Guzallik mulkining vorislarimiz" ("The beauty of the world is our heritage"), a 30-minute programme in which children of different ages present their own creative work, poems, stories, drawings and essays, showing how they view and understand the environment and society and expressing their own vision of the future;

"Ozodlik ulqasi" ("Land of freedom"), a radio quiz programme in which children present stories and poems about their independent country and the people to whom it really belongs, about the history of the State and the memories of its people. The programmes reflect the level of development of the country's children, exploring their views and their attitudes;

"Agar rahbar bulib qolsam" ("If I become a leader"), a programme in which children describe their plans and ideas about ways of improving their lives and the environment and raising the standard of living of their people. These 30-minute programmes are regular slots during the "Kalacak tongi" ("Morning of the future"), broadcasts;

"Tong yulduzi", "Kalacak tongi" and "Mehmoni" ("Morning star", "Morning of the future" and "Visiting"), a regular review produced by the national children's newspaper *Tong yulduzi* and conducted by the newspaper's top journalists, children's writers and poets;

"*Gulhan* sahifalarida" ("In the pages of *Gulhan-Campfire* magazine"), a programme in which children learn about recent issues of this children's magazine and in which a wide range of other children's publications - books, textbooks, popular articles, etc. - are also publicized. The programme includes 7-10 minute review spots, during which scientists and specialists are invited to explain items which might be difficult for children to understand;

"Uzligimni izlaiman", 30-minute programmes designed to promote self-understanding and self-awareness, in which historians, philosophers, scientists and other prominent academics and figures from the arts world are invited to discuss issues relating to the development of the individual, of mental faculties and of human capabilities in general;

"Ilmli ming yashar", 30-minute programmes giving reports, from schools and colleges about the accomplishments, projects and research carried out by the pupils and students themselves and presenting stories about famous scientists and other legends, designed to heighten the awareness of children and teenagers of the need to study;

"Ekologiya, salomatliq va bolalar" ("Environment, health and children"), 30-minute programmes about children's activities in this area and about environmental education in general;

"Bir tanmiz, bir jonmiz - qadim ona Turkistonmiz", 30-minute programmes bringing together children of the same age from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and other countries, to discuss life in their own countries and their various hobbies;

"Donishnoma", 30-minute programmes designed to promote respect for parents, for elders, for the country's language and for its national and spiritual heritage. The programmes take the form of narrative and stories of an educational nature.

283. Close attention is also given to the physical development of the younger generation. In order to promote a healthy way of life in society and to prevent illness, young people are encouraged to take up exercise and sport and, as part of the implementation of the presidential decree of 10 November 1998 on the State programme for the reform of the Uzbek health system, on 27 May 1999 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a decision on 27 May 1999 on measures to promote the development of physical culture and sport in Uzbekistan.

Criminal justice system: special protection of children (arts. 30-36)

284. Over recent years, an entire range of measures have been applied in Uzbekistan to combat crime and delinquency among minors. When dealing with specific offences committed by young people, a case-by-case approach is followed in determining penalties, taking into account the nature of the offence and the personality of the perpetrator.

285. Commissions on minors' affairs have been set up in Uzbekistan, to investigate the problem of neglected children, to conduct awareness-raising work among young people, to provide assistance in finding work, to uphold the rights of children and young people and to coordinate the efforts of State authorities and voluntary associations in all these matters.

286. Over the past few years aspects of juvenile delinquency have been reviewed at various coordinating and interdepartmental conferences and meetings and by the boards of the procuratorial authorities, which have discussed the more urgent problems of crime among children and those aspects of most practical significance, developing recommendations for the attention of the authorities under their jurisdiction, designed to boost the effectiveness of local-level procuratorial supervision.

287. Available statistics show that procuratorial supervision has been stepped up over the last five years. There has been a substantial increase in the number of procuratorial inspections, more objections have been lodged regarding breaches of the law, more recommendations filed and more procuratorial actions of other kinds have been taken. In the conduct of these inspections, particular attention is given to the protection of the constitutional rights and lawful interests of children.

288. In particular, the procuratorial inspections have covered such issues as compliance with the statutes on education, health and labour, the observance of legality by minors' affairs inspectorates and commissions in their work and also by minors' reception and placement centres, and the provision of arrangements for education and training in places of detention, special schools and vocational colleges for young offenders.

289. Over the last five years, the procuratorial offices have conducted 8,388 inspections of compliance with the laws relating to minors, lodging 1,704 objections, submitting 6,792 recommendations on measures to suppress contraventions of the law and

conditions conducive to such contravention, serving warnings on 3,657 officials, issuing 1,452 instructions, instituting disciplinary, administrative and material proceedings against 5,799 officials and, in the exercise of their general supervisory functions, filing 210 criminal suits. As stipulated in article 13 of the Uzbek Criminal Code: "Individuals of sound mind who have attained the age of 16 at the time of the commission of a crime may be held liable".

290. When the Uzbek Criminal Code was drafted and adopted in September 1994, a number of provisions and stipulations set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child were taken into account and duly reflected.

291. Under Uzbek law, persons who have attained the age of 13 may be held criminally liable, but only for the commission of premeditated murder in aggravating circumstances (article 97, second section). Criminal liability is engaged from the age of 14 for certain types of serious offences, and from the age of 16 for all other crimes. In addition, the benign disposition of the Uzbek State is manifested in the inclusion in article 555 of the Uzbek Code of Criminal Procedure, alongside other preventive measures, of the following: pledge of good conduct, personal suretyship, suretyship of a voluntary association or collective, release against payment of a deposit, release under surveillance. Minors may also be placed under the supervision of their parents, wardens or guardians, wardens, or, where applicable, persons in charge of the children's institutions in which they are being raised.

292. Children who have attained the age of 14 at the time of commission of a crime, shall incur liability for crimes covered by the first section of article 97, articles 98, 104-106, 118, 119, 137, 164-166, 169, the second and third sections of article 173, articles 220, 222, 247, 252, 263, 267, 271 and the second and third sections of article 277 of the Criminal Code. Liability for the crimes covered by articles 122, 123, 127, 144, 146, 193-195, 205-210, 225, 226, 230-232, 234, 235 and 279-302 of the Criminal Code may only be incurred by persons who have attained the age of 18 at the time of commission of the crime.

293. The liability of offenders aged under 18 is engaged in accordance with the general principles of the Criminal Code and with due regard for the specific conditions set forth in part 6 of its section on general provisions. Under article 558 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, remand in custody may only be applied as a preventive measure in exceptional cases, when a minor has been charged with the commission of a crime carrying a sentence of deprivation of liberty for periods of more than three years and when other preventive measures are not likely to ensure appropriate conduct by the minor in question.

294. Pursuant to section 1 of the presidential decree of 30 April 1999, granting an amnesty on the occasion of the proclamation of 9 May as Remembrance and Veneration Day, persons who committed crimes while still minors are to be released from their punishment, including both custodial and non-custodial sentences.

295. A system of care and guardianship is provided for children deprived of a family environment (articles 165-215 of the Family Code). The mahallya also provides a comprehensive range of material and moral support for such children and monitors the conditions in which they are raised and educated.

296. Taking account of the general provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child relating to special protection measures for children in conflict with the law and with due regard for the particular attention given by the international community to these important problems, the Republic of Uzbekistan ratified the Convention in December 1992.

297. Whereas in 1992 1,770 minors were detained by the authorities, in 1996 this number dropped to 1,390.

298. When authorizing detention, procurators personally study the materials of the case, review the grounds for arrest and, in all cases, question the minor charged with the offence about the circumstances in which the preventive measure is being applied. The legislation also prescribes that, when minors are being remanded in custody, they must be kept separate from adults.

299. Particular attention is given to the observance of legality in the conduct of pre-trial inquiries relating to children and adolescents. Thus, minors held in detention have the right to immediate access to legal assistance, ensuring that their legal counsel is present from the moment they are first questioned, whether as suspects or as persons charged with offences. To give strengthened effect to the rights and lawful interests of minors, the Criminal Code contains rules of law prescribing the mandatory presence, whenever minors are being questioned, of their lawful representatives or parents. Article 554 of the Code of Criminal Procedure prescribes the presence of a teacher or psychologist at the questioning of minors. Article 552 prescribes the presence of legal counsel and a legal representative when charges are being laid against a minor. Under article 552 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the questioning of a minor suspected or charged with the commission of a crime may not extend for more than six hours, not including a one hour break for rest and refreshment.

300. Much stricter penalties are now prescribed for inducing minors to engage in anti-social activities. Thus, whereas in 1992, 63 adults were charged with such inducement, in 1996 this figure increased to 146.

301. With regard to article 34 of the Convention, the Criminal Code gives particular prominence to the rule of law protecting children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (article 128, on sexual relations with persons under the age of 16; article 129, on the sexual abuse of persons under the age of 16; article 131, on the keeping of establishments of ill-repute and procurement involving minors; article 135, para. (c), on the recruitment of persons for the purposes of exploitation). Article 130 of the Criminal Code establishes criminal responsibility for the preparation or distribution of pornographic materials to persons under the age of 21.

302. With regard to article 35 of the Convention, special measures have been adopted to prevent trafficking in and the smuggling, smuggling and abduction of children. Articles 137 and 245 establish criminal liability for the abduction of a child and for the taking of children as hostages.

303. With regard to article 33 of the Convention, the State accords particular attention to protecting the health of the younger generation. Article 273, paragraph (d), prescribes criminal prosecution for the unlawful preparation, obtention, carriage or transfer for the purposes of sale of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances in educational establishments or in other places frequented by school children or students for the conduct of their educational, sporting or social activities.

304. Minors against whom criminal or administrative charges have been laid or who have been convicted have the right to appeal, including through their legal representatives, to the courts and to the procurator's office against the unlawful actions of officials.

305. Voluntary organizations and local authorities also play a role in ensuring that children are raised and educated in a spirit of diligence and respect for the law.

306. In August 1996, the Kamolot Foundation held a round table attended by representatives of relevant ministries and government departments, on the issue of preventing criminality among young people and ways of identifying and suppressing criminal tendencies. The conclusions of the round table were submitted to the Oliy Majlis, the Supreme Court and the Ministry of Justice.

307. Joint measures have been conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Tashkent hokimiyat and the Council of the Trades Union Federation, aimed at reforming problem adolescents and registered with the Tashkent districts internal affairs offices, and annual sports camps are also organized for young people with a view to preventing delinquency and preparing them for military service.

308. The mahallya cooperates closely with local internal affairs, procuratorial and judicial authorities to prevent the spread of drug addiction and alcoholism among children and various joint measures are conducted to that end. Whenever teenagers are found to be behaving in an anti-social manner, their parents and teachers are summoned to a mahallya meeting, and ways of correcting their behaviour are discussed.

309. Where an adult is found to have had sexual contact with a minor, a severe reprimand is administered by the mahallya, which immediately reports the incident to the appropriate authorities.

310. Thus, the law enforcement and other State authorities are taking the necessary steps, with the broad support of the public, to ensure compliance with the principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to enhance the responsibility of the country's officials for this aspect of their work.

311. The foregoing clearly demonstrates that a large volume of work is being carried out, at many different levels, in the Republic of Uzbekistan to ensure the comprehensive protection of mothers and children and to uphold the rights and lawful interests of minors in accordance with the provisions of the Uzbek Constitution and legislation and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Special protection measures against economic exploitation, including child labour (art. 32)

312. Over the years since its independence, a sound legislative and regulatory framework has been built up in Uzbekistan for upholding the rights of children and protecting them from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be harmful to their health.

313. The law of the Republic of Uzbekistan prescribes that the State shall protect the rights of minors through the adoption of statutes and the monitoring of compliance in the areas of labour law, occupational safety, social welfare and education.

314. The Labour Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which entered into force in April 1996, sets 16 as the minimum age for admission to employment. As part of their preparation for employment, pupils and students aged 14 and over at general education schools, vocational technical colleges and secondary educational establishments are permitted, during after-study hours, to perform light work which poses no hazard to health. With the written consent of one parent or of a person acting in the parent's stead, young people may be admitted to employment from the age of 15.

315. With due regard for particular physical, psychological and social conditions, youngsters aged 16-18 may not work more than 36 hours a week and those aged 15 and 16 (and also schoolchildren aged 14-16 working during their holidays) may not work more than 24 hours a week, and shall receive the same remuneration as employees in the same categories working a full working week.

316. All persons under 18 may only be admitted into employment after undergoing a preliminary medical check and thereafter are obliged to have annual medical checks until the age of 18.

317. Pursuant to articles 239-244 of the Labour Code, employees aged under 18 shall be accorded the same treatment in the workplace as adult employees and shall also enjoy additional benefits in such areas as vocational safety, working hours and leave. They shall have annual leave of not less than 30 calendar days, which they may take during the summer or at any other time of year that suits them.

318. To protect the health of young people, the State passed legislation prohibiting the use of the labour of persons under 18 in certain jobs listed as having adverse working conditions.

Following the adoption of this statutory instrument, the number of young people working in adverse working conditions in the industrial, transport and construction sectors dropped by half and in the communications sector all young people were moved from jobs with adverse working conditions.

319. The State ensures optimal working conditions for young people performing work that involves the manual lifting and moving of loads, to ensure that they suffer no damage to their physical development and health. In 1996, health standards were adopted stipulating the maximum permissible loads for young people, which for boys aged 16-18 are set at 13 kg and for girls at 7 kg. Boys aged 14-15 and girls aged 16-18 may only be required to lift loads in exceptional circumstances.

320. The State has taken a number of steps to extend the educational and training opportunities available to young people and there are now more than 60,000 students in general educational and secondary technical colleges. Young employees following remote courses in specialized secondary and higher educational establishments are entitled to receive from their employers at least half the travel costs of one return journey per year to their respective college, to enable them to attend laboratory practicals or examinations. The same conditions apply to travel costs connected with the preparation or defence of dissertations or the sitting of final examinations.

321. Employees successfully following courses in general education schools, which involves no disruption of their employment, follow a working week which has been shortened by one working day or by the corresponding number of working hours spread over the week, and those following courses at general education schools in rural areas have their working week shortened by two working days or by the corresponding number of hours spread over the week.

322. Students attending higher education establishments shall be released from their jobs during the academic year for a total of at least 36 working days or the corresponding number of working hours. Where they are following a five-day working week, the total number of working hours for which they are released from their jobs remains constant, while the number of working days for which they are released varies in accordance with the length of their shift.

323. During periods when they are released from their jobs, employees following educational courses are paid at least 50 per cent of the average monthly wage at their primary work place and not less than the established minimum wage.

324. The State constantly monitors compliance with the legislation on child labour and the regulations and standards regarding their occupational safety. Specially empowered States bodies have been set up for such monitoring: these are technical and regulatory labour inspectorates, with the power to institute disciplinary, administrative and even criminal proceedings against employers and officials, regardless of the forms of ownership and management of the enterprises in their charge, for contraventions of the legislation on juvenile labour.

325. For young people, and in particular school-leavers from general education schools who lack the relevant vocational training, as well as those categories of young people who, for one reason or another, have not continued their studies or started work, a very important social protection measure is provided in the form of retraining and further training programmes. In 1996, a total of 17,880 temporarily unemployed young people in Uzbekistan underwent vocational guidance and were assigned to vocational training courses by the labour authorities.

326. Under Uzbek law, all unemployed citizens (young people) who have been assigned to vocational training courses are found full-time jobs on the basis of trilateral contracts, between the labour exchange, the educational establishment and the enterprise concerned.

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